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Saturday Review of Literature

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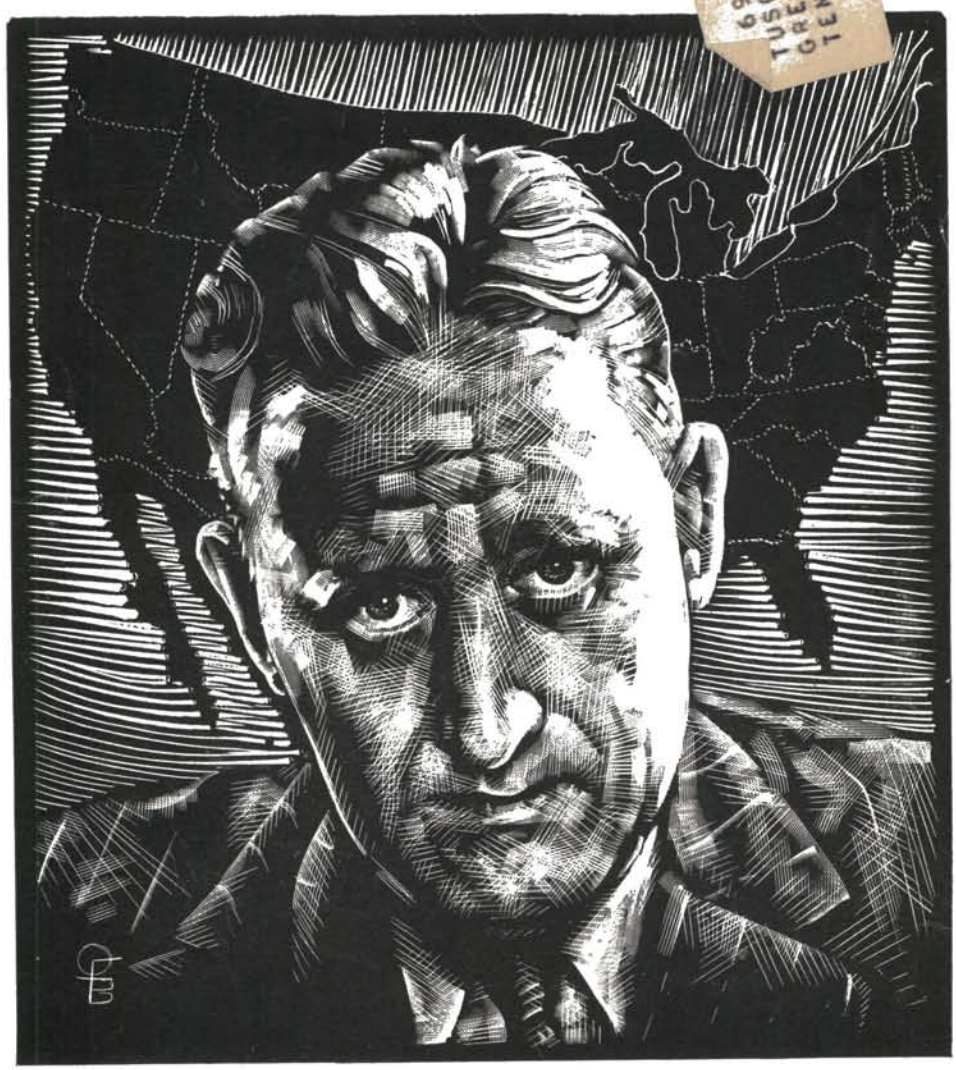

John Gunther, author of "Inside U.S.A." (See page 9)

Down with Wylie! Up with Mom!

By ESTELLE AUBREY BROWN

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TRADE Winds

THE LITERARY SCENE

● ● In Boston, where the State of Massachusetts's attempt to declare "Forever Amber" obscene, and vendors of same liable to criminal action, proved happily futile, Attorney General George Rowell, spearheading the prosecution, produced this absorbing statistical analysis of the book:

70 references to sexual intercourse.
39 illegitimate pregnancies.
7 abortions.
10 descriptions of women dressing, undressing, or bathing in the presence of men.
5 references to incest, 10 to the badger game, 13 ridiculing marriage.
49 "miscellaneous objectionable passages."

Mr. Rowell concluded his indictment by declaring, "The references to women's bosoms and other parts of their anatomy were so numerous I did not even attempt to count them." In short, the prosecution provided a perfect capsule formula for a fool-proof best seller. Associate Justice Frank J. Donahue dismissed all charges, remarking wryly that "while this novel is conducive to sleep, it is not conducive to a desire to sleep with a member of the opposite sex."

The decision apparently convinced everybody but the U. S. Postal authorities. Sales executives of Macmillan returned happily to New York, appropriated an additional $20,000 for advertising, counted on boosting the over-all sale to a not-so-cool two million. The vindicated Kathleen Winsor announced that she was completing a new novel with a contemporary setting. A champion of "Forever Amber" explained, "It is not true that the heroine had a sick mind. She merely was suffering from a strip-de-carcass infection."

● ● In real estate sections, note was made of the fact that Eric Hodgins, who bemoaned the cost of erecting a roof over one's head in "Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House," had sold his own dream house for a modest profit of one hundred per cent.

● ● In Augusta, Ga., friends of Novelist Frank "Vixen" Yerby announced a public reception at the scene of his birth, blasted a Dial Press publicist's dream of hailing him as "The Kentucky Yerby."

● ● In the famed Thanatopsis Poker Club, at the climax of a big pot the other evening, a playwright warbled "Won't You Call Me Sweetheart?" His opponent obliged with the refrain of "I'll Be Seeing You." When he saw four queens in the hand against him, he murmured sadly, "Goodbye, Mr. Chips," and vanished into the night.

● ● In Mt. Holyoke, the Press Bureau traced back the origin of a set of alleged 1837 regulations reprinted here several weeks ago. Apparently they were concocted from whole cloth by a forgotten wit on the *Harvard Crimson,* and the college authorities are getting pretty tired of repudiating them. Editor Ted Weeks, of *The Atlantic Monthly,* points out that Mt. Holyoke authorities scarcely could have "forbidden the reading of the magazine" in 1837, since the very first issue published was dated November 1857.

● ● In New York, Paul Hollister, Jr., who writes the sprightly adjoining column, "From Where I Sit," awaited first reviews on a novel of his own, "Fine Tooth Comb," due from Doubleday on June 5.

● ● In bookstores and publishing offices, readers chuckled over a prospectus of "The Blue Sky Book Club" which appeared mysteriously in the mails and gravely promised "all the books ever published absolutely free," plus phonograph records of the readers' own criticisms, with their favorite authors, "quick frozen and ready to serve," as a dividend. As perpetrators of this lethal hoax persistently refused to reveal themselves, suspects multiplied. Best bet: a couple of smart apples in the William Sloane promotion department.

Meanwhile, the Book-of-the-Month Club made real news when it announced its intention of distributing a "mid-summer selection," another way of saying it would issue books thirteen times a year instead of twelve. This change, plus a recently adopted policy of offering alternate selections, means added volume all around.

● ● In Philadelphia, Brentano's introduced a scheme of its own, "The Home Reading Club." Its offer: as many books as a patron can read for $12 a year. Books are mailed in cartons, with an extra gummed label for returning same. First batch of members has been averaging 3.3 books a month, and general response has been so great the club soon outgrew its original space in a retail branch and moved into its own headquarters. In Columbia, Mo., Ginn's Chain of Books, Inc., thought the scheme worth emulating, began its campaign with a full-page ad in the *Chicago Tribune.*

● ● In Poughkeepsie, writes Marion Ewing, Smith Brothers sent a generous consignment of cough drops in their familiar packages to European Relief. A Viennese author reported, however, that the local belles weren't having any. It appears they took one

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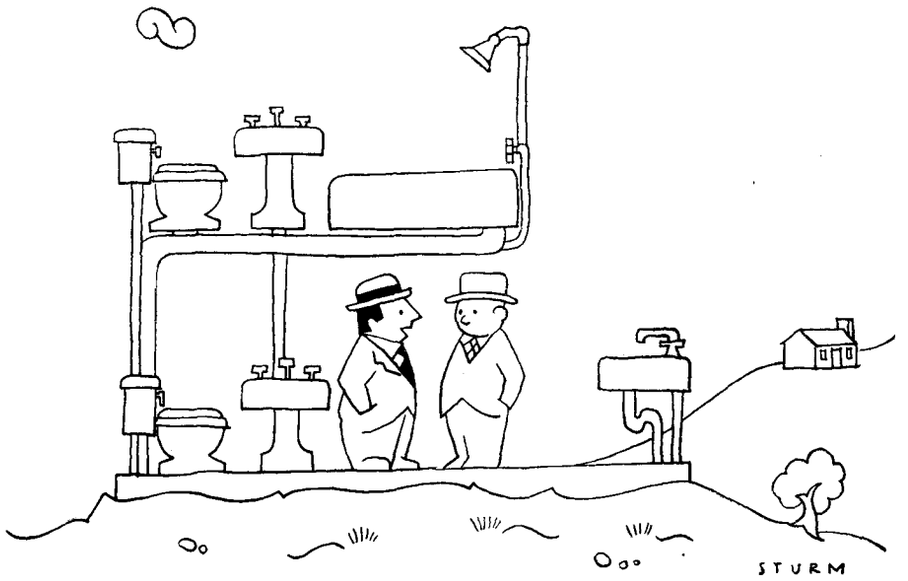

"The plumbers were ready and we didn't dare put them off."

look at the Smith Brothers' luxuriant beards and figured that the drops would produce the same adornments on their own chins!

● ● In Minnesota, the early efforts of Thomas ("Mister Roberts") Heggen, were not universally appreciated. The *Minnesota Daily* has unearthed this protest from its files: "Can't you do something about this guy Heggen's alleged journalistic efforts in the *Daily*? It is the sort of drivel that gives the university a bad name."

● ● In Sunningdale, Fraser Young (*SRL* cryptographer) toiled faithfully on a novel concerning the murder of a famous Metropolitan opera star. Title: "The Trill Is Gone."

● ● In the Crowell shipping room, executives wondered what to do with a rush order for one copy of "Roget's International Disorders."

● ● In Central Park, reports a breathless Katherine Brush, a flock of pigeons settled around Donald Ogden Stewart, who promptly inquired, "Have you any messages for me?"

● ● In Hollywood, Sydney Box sought to register the title of his new picture property, "Dear Murderer." Sorry, regretted the Johnston Office, but it conflicted with one previously spoken for: "The Deerslayer," by a fellow named Cooper.

● ● In *Go* magazine, an enthralled correspondent described a dinner party that included Somerset Maugham. The Chinese butler remarked pleasantly, "Good evening, Mr. Maugham. I think it only fair to tell you I didn't care much for your last book."

An hour later Mr. Maugham was missed by the assembled guests. A scouting party discovered him in the kitchen, hotly defending his literary style to the butler.

● ● In Prague, an alert publisher addressed this letter to Sinclair Lewis's American sponsors: "Owing to the fact we shall realize in the very near future 'Cass Timberlane' and 'Kingsblood Royal' in Czech, be so kind and borrow to us all the propagation material and the votes of print in your files. We should like to institute these books under a special campaign into the Czech public."

● ● In Boston, clerks at Goodspeed's are selling a raft of their boss's "Treasury of Fishing Stories." "It's the perfect fisherman's holiday," they tell customers. "This is one time none of the big ones got away!"

● ● In Moscow, Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes was blasted as a "musty capitalist reactionary." The Doyle estate promptly suggested that the Soviet come across with some of the royalties it had earned through the sale of whopping editions of the reactionary's exploits.

● ● In Paris, Jean-Paul Sartre sent out invitations to the swanky première of his dual bill, "The Tombless Dead" and "The Dutiful Prostitute," forgot to hold one for himself, was refused admission at the gate.

● ● In the Columbia Faculty Club, Carlton J. H. Hayes made this deathless observation: "The artichoke is the only vegetable you have more of when you finish eating it, than you had when you started."

BENNETT CERF.

"From where I sit"

FROM where I marvel would be a better title for this particular column. My friend H. W. HEINSHEIMER has come through with a bang.

It's really fantastic the swath this guy cuts. Even before his book, **Menagerie In F Sharp,** came out, famous composers and directors and pianists and conductors and singers were phoning him to tell him what a terrific book he had written. Even Artur Schnabel, half way to Europe on the Elizabeth, saw it and thought HEINSHEIMER's remark about "conditions must be dreadful in Europe" very musically apt. As I write this, there has been only one review of the book, that by Gerald W. Johnson in the Sunday *Trib*, and Johnson takes three columns to tell how much he liked it. In fact the only doubtful note in Johnson's review was whether a man who had been in this country only nine years could understand American humor and the American language and could write such a book without help or ghosting or "as told to" or what have you. I am HEINSHEIMER's editor, and I assure you, he wrote every word of it. I did change a comma on page 176.

Last night at a little celebration party Mrs. Heinsheimer gave, Eric Leinsdorff said, "I tell you why the book is so marvelous."

"It's not as good as all that," kidded Aaron Copland. When he said it, he looked very much like the tax income expert Groucho Marx said he looked like.

"I disagree," continued Leinsdorff. "The great thing about it is that it takes the rose-colored glasses off the music business. It is better than all the other music books because anyone can understand it, because it is amusing, and because it does not mince words or crawl before any personality, however famous. Really, it is so marvelous."

Copland wasn't listening, he was buried in Johnson's review of the book, smiling and nodding approval. "Fine, Hans," he waved the review, and then set to work on a plate of schnucklewurst mit schtrudelschtumpin.

paul

DOUBLEDAY 50th Anniversary

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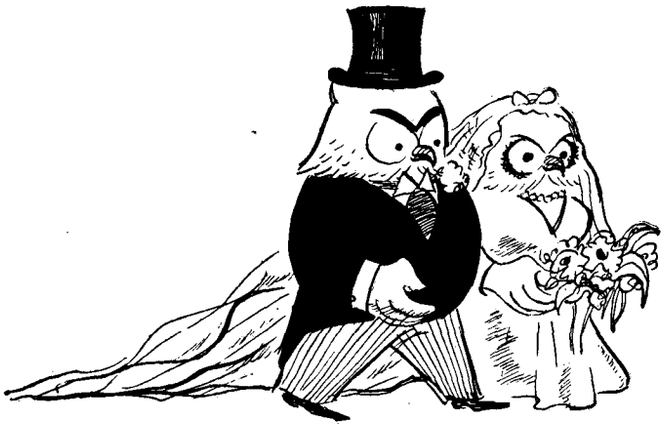


For better, for worse

TODAY is Walt Whitman's birthday. It is also the birthday of a sharp-tongued old lady with a wicked laugh who knows the same things about men and women Whitman knew. She was born later in the century, of course, and being a woman, was considerably more restricted in her action and expression than was Whitman, but she knew about the rightness of the body and the soul. If the ideas startled her, we still know her well enough to be sure she enjoyed these lines of his when she first read them:

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man.

She probably laughed that singular and funny and nasty little laugh. She would certainly agree in principle—and then go on to thoughts of marriage, legal and legitimate, that were not an essential part of Whitman. For she keeps a rare, objective interest in marriage as an institution.

She thinks a great deal of "modern" talk about marriage is silly, the same way that she thinks ninety percent of current love songs are silly, because she hates all turning away from facts and reality. (Well over half a century ago she sustained her first major disillusionment with literature when she discovered that the stories in her school primer were not true things that happened in real life. In the past half-century she's mellowed.) But having once accepted the compromise of "true stories" not being "true" at all, she now finds reading satisfaction in all kinds of well-constructed prose.

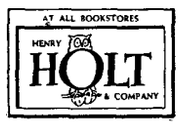
Normally this lady is not an anthology reader, but a couple of people down in Baltimore recently compiled one about her favorite subject—marriage—and it will be a pleasure to see that she gets a copy. FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE is a comfortable book in the hand, with nearly five hundred pages of the good sound reading matter she likes to have handy. There are stories here she would have read many years ago and others that, seen for the first time, will give her a chance to laugh that particular laugh we call the short snort, which she reserves for the successfully absurd (i.e. James Thurber's tale of marital desuetude called MR. PREBLE GETS RID OF HIS WIFE.) There are forty-three stories in all, and they strike off facets that illuminate married life as it has been lived in different lands, through countless generations, back to the first century A.D. when Petronius had things to say about the subject in his brilliant little story, THE MATRON OF EPHESUS. "May the gods forbid," said the Matron, "that I should lay eyes at one time on the corpses of the two men who are dearest to me!" Forthwith she kept one a live body.

Our lady is sure to judge the Matron with the eye of a contemporary. The fact is that all the stories collected here were selected for some quality of strength or immediacy or universality which makes each one seem contemporary, whether it be Boccaccio's story of PATIENT GRISELDA or Catherine Brody's THE SATURDAY NIGHT BLUES. Our lady—and her sons and grandsons—will find sophisticated humor in some, gentle truth in others, and —certainly—the sharp sadness of heartbreak in a few stories as it comes to a few marriages.

Editors Kling and Kling are people with a special interest in marriage quite aside from the fact that they are married to each other, and happily. Mr. Kling, who is an attorney, first became interested in the wider aspects of married life and its results through his extensive divorce practice. Subsequently, his wife became interested and they collaborated on a marriage guide. The present collection is the direct result of a great deal of thought and much reading, both for pleasure and for information. The Klings have taken stories of married people everywhere; they have covered twenty centuries in time, and the result is a book of great value—possibly an increasing value in proportion as the divorce rate increases, since certain of the stories point a way to happy endings from seemingly insoluble problems.

The men and women who have written them are, or have been, masters of fiction. Consequently, they have produced fiction that is as credible as fact. Among them are Dreiser, Balzac, Chekhov, O. Henry, Dorothy Parker, James Thurber, and many more of like stature. The result is a kind of firm, well-constructed prose throughout; what our old lady with the impossible laugh considers a reasonable substitute for fact. Knowing her, and recalling her ability to spot a phony a mile off, we have satisfactory feelings about the potential sales for this book.

A collection of famous marriage stories
edited by
ESTHER B. KLING and
SAMUEL G. KLING



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The Saturday Review of Literature

Down with Wylie! Up with Mom!

ESTELLE AUBREY BROWN

WHO is Mom whose children are rising up to call her everything but blessed?

Mom is the woman of a maculate and multiple conception. She was conceived of the male oratorical cant that long pictured her as a haloed Madonna instead of a fallible human being; of the ranting baby-kissing politician who sells his manhood for a vote; of the lobbying purveyors of orchids whose itching palms gave us Mother's Day; of the radio that makes the air waves viscous with the treacle of sex; of the sensational movies that represent tinseled falsehood as truth; of the slinkily sensuous advertisements that use her nearly naked body to sell bath salts; of the pictorial publications that make a fetish of female anatomy; of editors of the yellow press and confessional magazines.

These are the acolytes that serve the high altar of Mammon, ceaselessly swinging their censers of phallic symbols. Mom did not create these acolytes. They did much to create her.

Mom is also the product of a secular system of education that pegged down its students, like Strassburge geese for fattening, and stuffed them with material knowledge while neglecting to feed their spirits that serve to lift them a bit above geese. The intellectual riches of life were made disagreeable home work, its psychical riches ignored. These students were taught survival values, which are not values but only means to a success in a commercialized society that requires dishonor, trickery, and ruthlessness to achieve. Yet the values of the good life are today what they have always been—intellectual integrity, honesty, and self-discipline.

Mom was our national dish of cheesecake incarnate. Its ingredients were youth, beauty, and sexual allure. These were all she needed as preparation for life. These were nearly all she got. For Mom our social order laid the only foundation of her house of life under the bed. The young man who married her had not been told that there should be an underpinning of character and intelligence under the rest of the house. He too had been suckled on cheesecake. When the house tumbles down he blames Mom. The blame rests on the social order that had nourished them, not on the flesh and bones of living, but on the spumescent icing of sex.

In the past century men have largely relinquished their duties as fathers. They were too busy battling the economic Frankenstein monster they had created to dwell on the birds and bees and development of character in their sons. Let Mom do it. Nowhere has this relinquishment of duty been more frankly confessed than in Philip Wylie's article in the last Christmas Book Number of *The Saturday Review of Literature* [Dec. 7]. Quoting one psychiatrist as his authority, he states that nearly three million young men flunked Army service because they had mothers. Strange as this may seem, readers found even more startling Mr. Wylie's implied hypothesis that these three million young men all had a miraculous birth. They had no fathers. At least neither the psychiatrist nor the author mentioned fathers. Apparently Mom just slapped them up together in an excess of maternal zeal. She reared them all alone. Lacking a psychiatric belief in the mass production of miraculous births, we know these three million young men did have fathers—fathers who were away from home earning the excusatory paychecks to account for having no other part in the rearing of their children.

MOM was fairly busy keeping the brats clothed and fed and washed behind the ears. She was, mistakenly of course, trying to prepare them for their chosen places in civil life. No doubt Mom tried to squelch certain male tendencies that she had good reason to distrust, such as the age-old habit of using fists instead of brains. This might have been avoided had the Army, with its millions of forms in quadruplicate, sent her a treatise on the care, feeding, and rearing of top sergeants. But had Mom been thus instructed her efforts would have been often frustrated by the social order that fed her children cheesecake.

The dignity of man is precious to him. Nowhere is that dignity more evident than when, legally or by self-appointment, he sits in judgment on his fellowmen. Mom's judges are of the self-appointed genre. Psychiatrists and critics are not a separate breed. They have parts and, presumably, hearts. Their private lives are similar to lives of other men. They are, also presumably, fallible.

How did Mom's judges get that way?

Who psychoanalyzes the psychiatrists?

Lacking a clinical record, Mom thinks she can make one of her own. She knows men pretty well.

Man has civilized himself out of his caveman tactics (except to drag Mom by the hair through books and articles) but his feeling of sex superi-

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—*From "Fourteen American Artists."*

"In the Parlor," by Honoré Sharrer."

ority remains intact. He thinks the woman of his choice should consider herself honored by his proposal of marriage. If she declines and marries some lesser man, his *amour propre* is affronted. If she does marry him she becomes the direct cause of his loss of personal dignity. Man carefully shields himself from the gaze of other men during the intimate times when he finds it imperative to relinquish his dignity. He cannot so shield himself from the woman in whose eyes lurks laughter at a natural order that from time to time deprives him of any dignity at all.

In college the prettiest girl went to the junior prom with his rival. In high school he made only the scrub team which girls did not cheer. In grade school some impertinent little female got higher marks than he did. In kindergarten the beautiful little girl with golden curls bruskly declined his kind offer to let her suck his lollypop and produced two lollypops of her own. At the age of three there was always a woman around to frustrate his efforts to use the living-room walls for a drawing board. During his first year or two some woman—mother, grandmother, aunt, or maid—had to keep his dirty little seat clean for him. And then came that terrible day, with Mom busy in the kitchen washing soiled diapers, when she left the poor helpless infant for a time to stew in his own juice and a cold damp feeling seeped through into his subconscious.

Can this be where the trouble started? Are Mom's critics suffering from a delayed reaction to that cold damp feeling?

Is this where Mom meets Woman face to face and recognizes her as the eternal frustrater of man's dignity; the eternal upsetter of his apple-cart in which he wants to ride triumphant and lordly and alone?

Into the horrescent pie of contemporary life Mr. Wylie thrust his thumb and pulled out Mom and is crying "what a big boy am I." Mom is to blame, not only for three million boys unfit to fight, but for some ten or more million other sons and daughters she has "wrecked." Mom has filled our asylums and half of the hospital beds.

MOM makes no claim to infallibility. She knows she was only one of the many ingredients in that indigestible pie tossed up by chefs whose badge of office was a dollar sign. Being the plum in the pie, she was naturally the only ingredient in which her male critics were interested. She thinks these critics should have thrust their hands into that pastry and brought out and examined its other components. Had they done so, they would have found two world wars in one generation that resulted in the anarchy, moral bankruptcy, and economic chaos of today. These wars, not Mom, caused the "restless promiscuity and high incidence of our infidelity," for these are the unfailing concomitants of carnage. Her critics would have found the false values taught our young people—values that turned and mocked them. They would have found the trust in a financial structure that turned and rended them. They would have brought to light the ancient beliefs that betrayed, the faith that failed. They would have discovered anew the glittering political promises that still serve the purposes of deception.

And in the complexity of these ingredients Mom's judges would have found the problems of body, mind, and spirit which beset the human race that created but cannot solve them. Among the thousands of people driven by these unsolvable problems into the refuge of insanity will be found many Moms.

Since Mom's critics were so generous with statistics, we wish they had added a few pertinent ancillary figures. We know our young men had been so poorly educated that most of them did not know what they were fighting for. We would also like to know how many of the three million unfit boys came from the slums that suppurate in the shadow of our vaunted skyscrapers; how many of them as children went cold and hungry during the depression—that era of free enterprise breadlines during which Mr. Wylie seems to have gone fishing. How many of these "emotionally unweaned" boys saw Mom standing in line for relief rations year after jobless year?

Were not many of these emotionally unweaned boys still clinging to Mom because during their childhood and adolescence she was the only fairly stable and protective element in their lives that did not fail them?

It is so much easier to blame Mom for the intellectual and spiritual immaturity of her children than to do something drastic to the social order that produced them. To correct that order man would have to rediscover the old forgotten virtue of good taste. He would have to drive from his temples the money changers before whom he genuflects. He would have to supplant his love of ease and luxury with fortitude and self-sacrifice. He would have to reintroduce himself into the family circle as something more than a paycheck. If in their schools he wants his sons to have the counsel and guidance of male teachers which they urgently need, he will have to begin paying those teachers as much as he pays mechanics.

Mr. Wylie makes a vindictive and tangential attack on a serious matter that should be approached frontally and dispassionately. This approach will disclose the shortcomings of both fathers and mothers. And it will also disclose Mom as another Galatea sculptured by sentimental man. He should have known that Aphrodite would take a mocking hand in the business. Nature would force her to do so, for in shaping that ivory image man disregarded, for his own devious purposes, the fifty-fifty biological foundation of the race.

(*Continued on page* 27)

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The Meaning of America

INSIDE U.S.A. By John Gunther. New York: Harper & Bros. 1947. 946 pp. and Index. $5.

Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS

A GREAT many things will be said about this book. It will be liked and disliked—and read. It deserves comparison with both James Bryce and the WPA Guides of the States. But essentially what John Gunther has written in this big, sprawling, colloquial book is a great contemporary adventure story about the United States. It is written, he says, for both the American himself wherever he may be, and for the Man from Mars—or Moscow. But actually it is the exciting, provocative, penetrating, and occasionally credulous story of John Gunther's struggle against time and space and swarm to accomplish the understanding of the United States in 946 tightly printed pages as of May 28, 1947. The country has sprawled and altered in detail beyond his seeing of it. Some of the politicians have gone home and some of the personages have gone to heaven since he wrote about them. The vitality of the nation is emphasized by the fact that America already sweeps on like a tide beyond his typewriter though Mr. Gunther is here seen swimming gallantly upon it.

In many ways it is a gallant book. Obviously, it is the story of a native's return though nothing is so evident in it as that Mr. Gunther has not lost touch with his native land through wanderings and writings in foreign ones. Better than most of us, Mr. Gunther knew his America before he deliberately set out this time to see it. The foreign correspondent had served his apprenticeship as reporter from the rackets of Chicago to the rape of Teapot Dome in Wyoming. He took with him on his travels knowledge hungrily gleaned from the writings of other men, from the "World Almanac" and the WPA Guides. He set out not only qualified to give a sharper scrutiny to the streets around his apartment in mid-town megalopolis but to understand also the changes that have overtaken Main Street since Sinclair Lewis made Gopher Prairie out of Sauk Center, Minnesota.

Above all, hardly any contemplation of America in our times has been so armed with both curiosity and self-confidence. Mr. Gunther is a traveler who appreciates talk, draft beer, and TVA. He has an eye for the beauties of wheat growing near Spokane and big girls walking in the noisy vacuum that is Texas. He has a gift for devastating words in the description of dulness, an amused sympathy for most of the crackpots of a continent, a corrosive contempt for such business as that of "the Company" in Montana, and a ready indignation for such fixed American cruelties as its treatment of the Negro, particularly in the South. Above all he has faith in America as "lousy with greatness."

The book will suffer from its length. In sheer poundage it is an ache to the reader's arm. Mr. Gunther has written into it his own expectation that his readers will skip around instead of perusing it steadily. Also, as he emphasizes himself, it is much too short. Few passages in the book are more exciting than a couple of paragraphs in which he lists some of the things he has left out. But proceeding eastward from California and Hollywood, Earl Warren, Giannini, Harry Bridges, and Henry Kaiser, he moves as the easily accepted and everywhere gladly informed native across the continent by mountains and deserts, gambling resorts, ghost towns and wheat fields, rushing and muddy rivers waiting for TVA-like Authorities, Stassen and old Henry Ford, General Motors and the UAW, the *Chicago Tribune* and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, delightful Alf Landon, Lausche, and the Tafts of Ohio. It is a process of men and States, places and problems which continues through New England, the Atlantic Seaboard, the South, and the big body of Texas which Mr. Gunther does not like despite its most beautiful American girls.

Even a reader can feel not only the prodigious variety and endless repetition of such a land but somehow come to the end of the book also with a feeling of dirty local trains on rough roadbeds (not many are like "the velvet line of the Milwaukee into Chicago"), the long and sometimes bumpy airline flights, the variety of hotels (a good many of which are not up to the Brown Palace in Denver). And this book is only half of what he found about which he means to write. Such explosive possibilities as Washington, D. C., the Catholic Church, big business and labor, women and education are preserved for another book, though details about all of them abound in this one.

Certainly nobody can know the difficulties of the job he has done so amazingly well as Mr. Gunther himself. He has undertaken to look at all the American commonwealths with an attention to details and personalities which Bryce did not attempt. He has brought to such details a glittering sharpness of judgment which no subsidized compilers of guidebooks could have considered. The result is somehow both vital and ephemeral as a picture of America in

THE AUTHOR: John Gunther got his first ringside view of history in 1924 as understudy for Chicago *Daily News* bureau heads in European capitals. By 1936, when he wrote the phenomenal "Inside Europe," he had covered wars, revolutions, *coups d'etat*, and peace conclaves all over the Continent, and knew as many notables as Lanny Budd. To corroborate "Inside Asia," published in 1939, he traveled 30,000 more miles. The next year he repeated the stint for "Inside Latin America." In 1944, he dropped two weekly national hookups to concentrate on his long-planned "Inside U. S. A." He spent thirteen months visiting the forty-eight states, fourteen months distilling millions of notes into volume one. No. 2 will be focussed on Washington. Then he hopes to write his autobiography and a book on Africa. At present, he is optimistic about peace. "There may be a few suicidal maniacs on this side who want a war," he says, "but they could all be doused by one good squirt of a fire hose." He was born in Chicago, had stories published by *Smart Set* and the *Bookman* while an undergraduate at the local university, wrote four novels—now out of print—and dozens of articles. Just before and during the war he lectured, broadcast, revisited Europe as NBC, NANA, and *Reader's Digest* correspondent. He was Blue Network international affairs commentator and War Department consultant on GI orientation films. Big, fair, a *bon vivant*, he's engaging, quick-witted, voluble; hates physical exercise, loves good music, the theatre, reading, and—especially—sleeping. He likes New York City best in America, and lives there, prefers "a mixture of Bloomsbury and Austrian Hills above Vienna" abroad. Confronted with his own pet question—"What do you believe in most?"—he answers, "The truth."

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its richest years, but also vital and significant as a book which should long be held in high regard as the honest description of his country in his time by a voracious, veracious, devoted, and articulate American.

The reading country may present Mr. Gunther with as many problems as the country he has written about. Until now he has been explaining far places to his fellow countrymen most of whom had never seen them. But in this book inescapably he is not writing for Americans, but for Californians and Kansans and Texans and New Yorkers—and writing about their scenes and problems which none of them will ever admit any stranger understands better than they themselves. (The criticism, he reports, caught him before he finished traveling, when he was called "a genius for grinding out a plausible chapter out of a twenty-four-hour visit.") A Carolinian will catch the little errors about Carolina which he would have missed entirely if they were errors about China—or even California.

Also, Mr. Gunther by the very quality of his forthright and often brilliantly illuminated honesty has almost issued an invitation to his victims to be his carping critics. Obviously, Senator John Bricker's friends —and a Presidential hopeful must have some friends—may not have so high an opinion of what Mr. Gunther says about America when he says that Bricker has never said anything in his life worth thirty seconds of anybody's time. Texas will not appreciate being called "a kind of vacuum." The South—not that it matters in literary appreciation as expressed in book buying—will certainly not like Gunther's indignant description of its handling of the Negro problem. The electric power industry will not appreciate his statement that it maintains the most ruthless and ubiquitous lobby at all governmental levels in the United States. All of them will find little errors in the big book with which to hit Mr. Gunther and use in the healing of their own hurts. But none of them are significant in his picture of the United States.

Actually, despite its occasional sharpness, this is a book of appreciations. Mr. Gunther may smile at chambers of commerce, but he loves their grandiose statistics. He even formally declares himself as a man who likes Philadelphia. I got the feeling that in big terms his eagerness was chiefly stirred by the possibilities which the pattern of TVA offers to rivers like the Missouri and the Columbia, and that his one steady indignation centered around the treatment of the Negro, particularly in the South. Certainly, the central theme of the whole book, however, is the meaning of America to such a man as John Gunther, who may possibly be more passionately native because he has devoted his life until now to the contemplation of the tragedies and fears of other continents. Indeed, in this book —as in all travel books—the man is as important as the image he brings home from his travels.

Outside of the dull and lifeless geographies nobody will find a more objective book about America than this one. This is honest, vivid reporting by one of the great craftsmen of that sometimes great art. There is admiration in it for both radicals and reactionaries. But it would be silly to suggest that the book is not highly subjective too. From California the Golden to Arkansas, the book is always Gunther as well as America, and the geography of Gunther deserves some description here. Certainly in view of some of his remarks, he cannot be strictly classified as a New Dealer. Perhaps the indefinites "liberal" or "progressive" would be more satisfactory words for him. Clearly in this book he qualifies as the American in a country which at heart and in the midst of all its vagaries remains puritan and radical—"in the old frontier sense of the word 'radical' "—and a believer in progress and reform.

He holds now to that faith that this is a land "lousy with greatness" but he points out clearly also that in a land where stupidity, greed, and complacency are as evident as the Rockies, the United States is a country facing the most dramatic dangers: "The next New Deal will make the last look mild." "Let there be fifteen million unemployed again, and blood can smear and spot the streets."

Mr. Gunther clearly expects no such bloody disaster even in a land which keeps the traditions of violence beside the directions of its greatness. This, he believes, "is a lucky country with an almost obsessive belief in the happy ending." That confidence is basic in every line of this book. There is not a line of soft optimism in it, but in these pages pessimism seems scarcely an American possibility. This may not be Guntherism only. It may rest in the fact that this is a story of a journey through America in the fattest of all the American years. The dangers remain. The dull are found often in command. John Gunther hides neither the fears nor the scars. But, if he has been far away and seen much of the world's dangers and tragedies, he has not lost—his long search has not shown him any reasons to lose—the prodigious and apparently indestructible hopefulness which was his heritage at home.

Jonathan Daniels is author of "Frontier on the Potomac." He was administrative assistant to FDR, is now executive editor of the Raleigh [*N. C.*] News and Observer.

The Great Cloud

By Jeremy Ingalls

LOOK, the cloud has risen. There it lies,
A mountain on horizons. Shall a wind
Disperse it? While the air-cooled room denies
This mountain at the window, shadow falls
And, fallen, sags the most authentic walls.

Look, mockers. Not a riddle will knock down
By yowling at the riddle. Here's a town
More terrible than phantoms, town of souls
And fiercely schooled. Where cloud-bank mountain rolls
The shape of tomb or ploughland, shape of death
Cries bugle. Common witness of the breath
No algebra can capture is apprised.
Try stethoscope. There's none. Yet, long surmised,
The never-can-be-measured pulse has stirred
A cloud across that cloud, has disinterred
The buried kinship. Cloud on cloud. Who weighs
Tossed algebras and hearts, their weight will raze
The authenticity of walls. The shock
Of cloud on cloud is storm and storm will roar
And mountain writhe and cloud transform to rock
And rock to cloud except there burst a door
By heart's assault and witness of the breath,
Hard lightning tunnel through the common death.

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Panorama of 21 Civilizations

A STUDY OF HISTORY. By Arnold J. Toynbee. Abridged by D. C. Somervell. New York: Oxford University Press. 1947. 617 *pp.* $5.

Reviewed by HAJO HOLBORN

THESE have been good days for those whose innocent self-assurance could produce simple formulas dressed in an imposing literary and academic gown. Arnold J. Toynbee does not belong to these simplifiers, despite the clamor of popular acclaim which has for the last few months engulfed this scholarly writer in our own enthusiastic country. Toynbee's learning is overwhelming, his style highly sophisticated, and his presentation of the course of history no easy summary from which facile conclusions could be drawn. His readers have to follow him far into the details and complexities of the life of civilizations, and an understanding is achieved only through the contemplation of the huge panorama of universal history.

Yet Toynbee, whose devoted followers here and in England could, before this year, have been counted perhaps in the hundreds, has been acclaimed in this country as the master seer who holds the key to the riddle of history. For four months the United States has been Toynbee-conscious. An astute advertising campaign for the new abridgment of his work, lectures in academic halls to overflow audiences the like of which has not been seen for years, laudatory reviews, articles in leading periodicals, have made Toynbee well known to the reading public of America. The Luce enterprises have adopted Toynbee; *Time* magazine lavished on him no less than eleven columns and a cover portrait.

The campaign was as surprising as it was unexpected. Basic to it perhaps was the hunger of a crisis-ridden people for the satisfactions of an orderly view of history. American historians do not begrudge Toynbee his sudden fame; yet as always on those rare occasions when a scholarly work achieves a wide popular acceptance there has been the danger of distortion and oversimplification. As yet, Toynbee has not received the serious critical attention he deserves. To convey adequately the structure and approach of this rich and complex work is impossible within the confines of the conventional short book review. It is the purpose of the writer to analyze and criticize the main points of Toynbee's "A Study of History" largely for those

For Arnold J. Toynbee "the real historical development is a spiritual process altogether . . ."

who already have some knowledge of the historian's work. But even here a brief rendition of Toynbee's thesis must be attempted in passing, a rendition which will, again, suffer inevitably from oversimplification.

Toynbee is no historian of the ivied walls. Foreign Office expert on the Near East during the First World War, reporter of the Greco-Turkish War, and more recently director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs and editor of its annual *Survey of International Affairs*, for over thirty years Toynbee has watched from an unparalleled vantage point the development of current history, while constantly adding to his knowledge of the past in reading. The result, more as a by-product of his career than anything else, has been his unique theory of civilizations.

Twenty-one civilizations, such as the Western, Hellenic, Egyptiac, Hittite, Indic, Sinic, Mexic, Yucatec, form Toynbee's field of historical study. Fourteen of these are dead, though some have left "fossilized relics" behind. Civilizations have come into being only during the last six thousand years, a small beat of time considering that human life commenced a few hundred thousand years ago. Therefore all civilizations are viewed by Toynbee as contemporaneous for philosophical purposes and taken to be parallel attempts of humanity to rise beyond primitivism.

This proposition has its merits. But Toynbee's interpretation has its pitfalls, too. He defines civilization as the smallest intelligible unit of historical study. Historic England, for example, cannot be understood unless attention is first focused on the whole of Western civilization of which she has formed an integral part. On the other hand a knowledge of Russian or even of Hellenic civilization is not needed in this connection. It is true that all surviving civilizations are living together today in a world-wide political and economic system, but their true being lies in their cultural individuality, which makes contacts like those between the Western and Russian civilizations rather ephemeral.

By conceiving of civilizations as self-contained entities Toynbee moves close to Spengler's theory of history whereby history repeats its inexorable cycle in one culture after another. Toynbee does not, however, consider civilizations as organisms which grow and lose their lifelike plants. It is rather the idea of the Spenglerian "soul of a culture" which seems reflected in Toynbee's "Study." For to him the real historical development is a spiritual process altogether. Political and social events are mere ripples on the surface of a stream that moves with a mighty drift invisible to the naked eye. The *élans* that produce civilizations are spiritual forces which Toynbee describes either in terms of Bergsonian philosophy or in New Testament words ("they are all seeds by the same Sower").

Still, in Toynbee's interpretation of history there is an uncertainty which in a way seems to mirror the mind of the author, who is at the same time both a mystic and a scholar proud of the capacity of the human intellect. It is clear that he feels that faith is the only power which moves mountains and the basic force in creating and sustaining civilizations. The age of Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, for example, is not given by him any recognition as a great period. But he assumes in many places of his work that the rise of civilization required the solution of some vital technological problems or in other words the application of reason.

A similar approach can be discovered when we turn from what Toynbee calls the response to the natural environment to the response to the human environment. Although he emphasizes vigorously that we are dealing here no longer with the macrocosmos but with a microcosmos of human relations where only qualitative judgments should be in order, he cannot quite dispense with one quantitative factor. The *élan* that carries civilizations forward is not a momentum of enduring life, but an amount of energy which will be used up in a long series of responses to challenges. This concep-

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tion is not identical but to some degree analogous with the Spenglerian idea of the inevitable death of civilizations.

Otherwise every effort is made to exclude any reference to biological cycles and to construe the birth, life, and death of civilizations as a struggle in the human soul. The disconcerting thought creeps up, however, that civilizations still in prime spiritual condition have been challenged and murdered by a human enemy who merely possessed greater power and in particular better technological weapons, as in the case of the Spanish conquest of the Incas. His humaneness and trust in the inner motivation of history make Toynbee shy away from drawing drastic conclusions about these fatalities of history. In general he is inclined to argue that such civilizations had already broken down and that the enemy applied only the *coup-de-grâce*.

Toynbee's civilizations are virtually self-contained units. They cannot learn from each other except in death. Once the initial obstacles of nature are overcome the growth of a civilization becomes an internal affair. Since civilization is a process of self-articulation through its individual members, Toynbee argues that history is made by great individuals, among them in the first place religious leaders, and by creative minorities. The mass adopts their ideas and manners by sheer emulation. But a special power of persuasion is required to convince the mass to part with traditional customs. The leaders acquire it by withdrawing for a time from active participation in the communal life. This motion leads to an "etherialization" of their moral and intellectual personalities which enables them to teach their fellow-men after their return.

"Withdrawal-and-return" is, therefore, after "challenge-and-response" the second "law" of history. It is fairly well applicable to a long series of prophets and religious leaders. With regard to intellectual and political leaders it is of more questionable value. Wisely, some of the examples given by Toynbee in the more extensive version of his work have not been repeated in the Somervell edition. Did, for example, some of the greater monarchs, like Louis XIV, ever have an opportunity of withdrawing? But the concept becomes more doubtful when it is used to define the position of the leading nations at various periods of history. Athens did not "withdraw" from Hellenic society prior to assuming her great role in the Hellenic-Persian War after 480 B.C. She was pushed into the sea by the invasion of Xerxes and returned as the leading naval power of Greece.

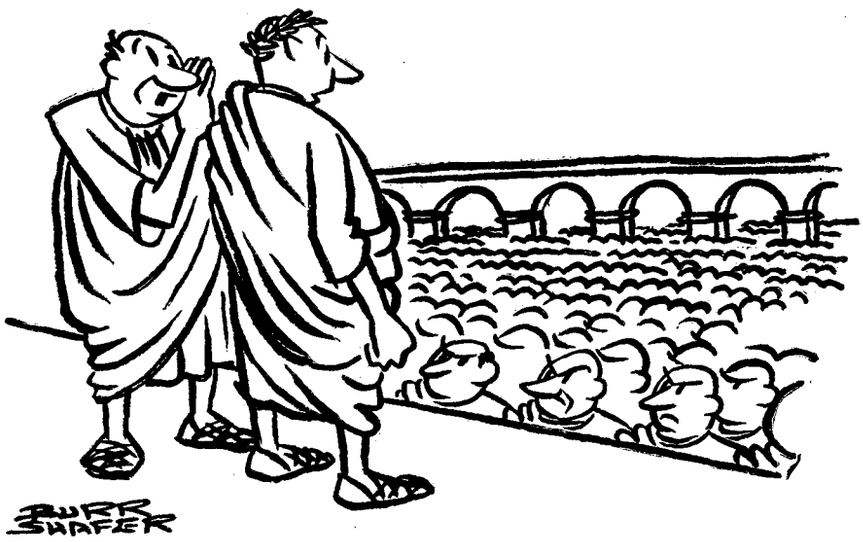
The break-down of civilizations, as already intimated, is, according to Toynbee, chiefly the result of the decline of the creativity in the creative minority which then turns into a "dominant" minority. As a consequence the masses cease to emulate the minority and the society begins to split open into various classes while losing at the same time its appeal to the unconverted "barbarians" outside. An "internal" and an "external" proletariat come into existence. (Toynbee defines "proletariat" as people "in" but not "of the society.") The "times of troubles" begin in which the dominant minority turns militaristic, and may try to build a universal state, though both philosophers and administrators may follow a nobler task. The external proletariat will form war-bands whereas the internal proletariat will devote itself to the building of a universal church. If the society enters the stage of full disintegration, the collaboration of the internal and external proletariat will produce a new civilization carried on by the external proletariat but with the faith bequeathed upon it by the internal proletariat of the old society. It is at this point that the separate character of civilizations break down: a rib is taken from the old to form the backbone of the new civilization.

In the opinion of the reviewer Toynbee's theories of history suffer from taking their clue almost exclusively from the collapse of the Roman empire. Even with regard to the latter event Toynbee's construction bypasses many fundamental problems. Strangely enough, the greatness of the Roman Empire receives no praise by the distinguished citizen and scholar of the British Empire. Rome's capacity to create law and unity in a chaotic world was her own genius, and it seems arbitrary to disregard her contribution and see in her history a senescent continuation of Hellenic life. The interaction between civilizations is far greater than Toynbee is willing to admit. It is also not confined to the religious heritage through a process of "affiliation" or "apparentation," but includes the social and political organizations which are an essential element of the real and ideal existence of any civilization. Historical challenges do not become merely "internal" and the affair of a creative minority, once a civilization has gotten under way.

Toynbee's "A Study of History" is strictly speaking not a philosophy of history. Modern philosophy of history, as represented among others by thinkers like Dilthey, Croce, Ortega y Gasset, or in England by R. G. Collingwood, has been chiefly concerned with the questions of historical knowledge itself. How can we gain a valid knowledge of the past while being ourselves only representatives of a passing moment in history? What methods does the historian employ to transcend the limitations of his subjective imagination and to achieve an objective view of history?

Toynbee seems not affected by these modern ideas. He does not entertain any doubt that the human mind is perfectly capable of correctly reconstructing the past. He states that there are three different methods of presenting the objects of our thought, and among them, the phenomena of human life. "The first is the ascertainment and recording of 'facts'; the second is the elucidation, through a comparative study of the facts ascertained, of general 'laws';

(*Continued on page* 29)



THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH
"Why not just tell them Caesar committed suicide?"

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Prussian Blue and Russian Red

THE RED PRUSSIAN: The Life and Legend of Karl Marx. By Leopold Schwartzschild. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1947. 407 *pp.* $4.

Reviewed by SIDNEY HOOK

ACCORDING to the author of this book the most important man of our era is Karl Marx—in fact, Mr. Schwartzschild is prepared to call our whole era Marxian. He holds Marx responsible not only for the existence of Soviet Russia but especially for the Soviet methods of terror. As if this were not enough, he attributes to him indirect responsibility for "all the other totalitarian states" which arose as a response to the Bolshevist challenge, as well as for whatever sacrifices of the liberal tradition are required in democratic countries to combat communist expansion. The result is an heroic interpretation of history which out-Carlyle's Carlyle. One need not accept the orthodox Marxist dogmas of historical inevitability to question this magical attribution of responsibility to Marx for all of modern history.

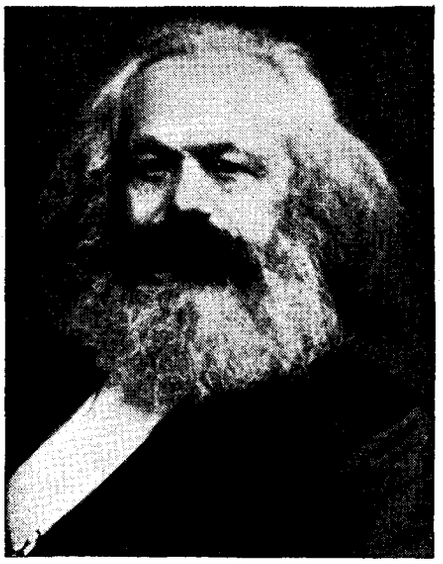
The text of the book does not establish in the slightest the ambitious thesis announced in the preface. Nor does it attempt to do so except in one chapter—entitled "An Intermezzo"—in which the author abandons his role as a biographer and bursts out in the role of embittered critic. As a biographer Mr. Schwartzschild brings to his task a considerable amount of information based on primary and secondary source material, and an almost unique qualification—an intense loathing and hatred for the subject of his biography. By itself neither great contempt for one's subject nor great admiration need necessarily be a bar to objective presentation and analysis.

Unfortunately, Mr. Schwartzschild fails almost completely in preventing his animus from distorting the picture he draws of Marx. It is not that the facts he relates are false but that in so far as they bear on Marx's character they are selected primarily from his worst sides—and asides—and given a uniformly unfavorable interpretation. Marx's letters are carefully combed for words and phrases that reveal his vanity, pettiness, and will to power, and these are made to appear as motivations of his doctrine. In addition, Mr. Schwartzschild, wherever he feels it necessary to fill out the picture, reads Marx's mind for us ("he thought back over the network of untruths and dishonesty in which he had entwined himself"), describes his behavior and motives as if he himself had directly observed them ("he searched people's faces for admiring glances"), and characterizes his economic research as the dabblings of a dilettante" who went about his work "like a crank who is only looking for confirmation of his preconceived opinions." The result is really more devastating to the biographer than to his subject. In making Marx appear like a third-rate villain in a third-rate melodrama, and as a kind of Cagliostro of the social sciences, Mr. Schwartzschild makes completely incredible both Marx's historical impact and his influence upon whole generations of thinkers who were neither knaves nor fools. We laugh at characters of the type Mr. Schwartzschild describes. For they do not even possess the maniacal sincerity of a Hitler, who can impress because he can frighten. In denying sincerity to Marx, Mr. Schwartzschild types him as a charlatan.

A biographer who admired Marx as much as Mr. Schwartzschild detests him, and using the same methods, would paint Marx as a revolutionary saint, and write an equally bad book.

During the First World War a follower of Bakunin published a critique of Marx in which he exposed him as a "Pan - Germanist." Mr. Schwartzschild goes him one better and presents Marx as "the Red Prussian." It is very instructive to see how Mr. Schwartzschild justifies his characterization, for it throws some light on the emphasis he gives to his study of Marx's character. As is well known, Marx describes only very sketchily the kind of society he expected to follow capitalism. Aside from indicating that it would be a planned economy under democratic political controls, he refused to follow the Utopian Socialists in laying down blueprints in advance. There is justice in criticizing Marx for reacting too strongly against the fanciful constructions of the Utopian Socialists and for his failure to recognize the possibilities of abuse and degeneration of political power in the socialist community. This, however, is not Mr. Schwartzschild's criticism. According to him, Marx had very definite ideas—"too definite"—of what socialism would be like. But he concealed them from everyone because "if he were to let them be known, he would have to give up all hope of ever gaining control over men and events."

What were Marx's ideas of the future and what kind of system did they define? "Prussia minus the Ten Commandments!" answers Schwartzschild. Marx's ideal was not what he



In "The Red Prussian" there is a "magical attribution of responsibility to Marx for all of modern history."

professed in the "Manifesto," "a community in which the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all." On the contrary, it was a society in which human beings will be treated as mere tools and raw materials in the hands of completely non-moral dictators who are a law unto themselves and for whom merciless terror and all pervasive propaganda are the scientific means of retaining power and organizing production. Prussia without the curb of the Ten Commandments is—in short—Stalin's Russia. For Marx this was the shape of the future. No wonder he did not breathe a word about it to anyone!

How, then, does Mr. Schwartzschild know it? He knows it because Marx was the kind of *person* he was. "What we should have would be a super-Prussian termite state, run by a sub-Prussian method. That . . . oozes from every pore of his personality." No matter what dreams of freedom and justice were to inspire socialists, "what would come of them under Marx's regime is logically [*sic!*] determined by his character as a human being." It should now be clear why Mr. Schwartzschild must create a portrait of Marx as a morally leprous character with a lust for power.

It seems to me quite obvious that what Mr. Schwartzschild hates about Marx is not his personality but his ideas, and that if he were to evaluate the latter differently he would offer us a different appraisal of the former. I cannot see any logical justification for linking the details of Marx's biography so closely to his ideas, which must be judged true or false independently of whether Marx was a revolutionary saint or hypocritical scoundrel or a mixture of both. Marx

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was a great man *because* of his ideas.

Mr. Schwartzschild is quite confident that Marx is responsible for the totalitarianism of Stalin because, "the tree is known by its fruit." His whole historical approach is very crude, not only because of his failure to consider the limiting influence of objective conditions but because of his neglect of the influence of other personalities on history in addition to that of Marx. Even if Stalin is regarded as Lenin's heir rather than as his usurper, his independent role in contemporary history has redetermined its course. And that Lenin was chiefly responsible for substituting the totalitarian conception of socialism for Marx's democratic socialist ideal is even easier to establish.

Mr. Schwartzschild deserves credit for recognizing the character of the present Soviet regime for what it is. He is free from all the illusions of the totalitarian liberals. But in implying that social democratic movements which have drawn their inspiration from Marx are necessarily committed to the Stalinist variety of totalitarianism because of the character of Marx's personality, he writes bad history. Worse, he casts unjustified aspersions upon the only democratic movement in Europe which, with encouragement from democratic forces in the West, can prevent Europe from engulfment in totalitarian darkness.

Sidney Hood, NYU philosophy department chairman, is author of "The Hero in History," and "From Hegel to Marx."

In the Deeps of Despair

EXISTENTIALISM. By Jean-Paul Sartre. Translated by Bernard Frechtman. New York: The Philosophical Library, Inc. 1947. 90 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by OLIVER BARRES

EXISTENTIALISM, as founded a century ago by the Danish prophet Kierkegaard, was a revolt against the Godforsakingness of Christendom. Despised and rejected by his own generation, this spindly-legged man with a mission dutifully prepared his time bombs. Now in this latter day the wretchedness of war has been setting them off in European centers of thought, and their reverberations are felt on distant shores, even in a country weaned on Emerson's "Self-Reliance."

For no matter how Jean-Paul Sartre tries to wriggle out of the accusation, his existentialism is a philosophy of despair. His own plays are full of forlorn and frantic characters, who constantly protest their helplessness in the face of life's baffling anxieties. In this lecture, which was originally delivered in 1945 in Paris, Sartre claims that his philosophy is really a treasure-house of stout self-confidence, but his creative works belie that defense. He has, indeed, reduced Kierkegaard's trembling of the finite before the terrible majesty of the infinite to "a simple sort of anguish that anybody who has had responsibilities is familiar with." But the sense of estranged isolation remains. This is man's world, says Sartre the atheist, and no one can help him out of it. Here on this mysterious sea of drowning swimmers, arms thrash the water in panic and voices cry out for help, but all in vain.

"The religious experience," writes Kierkegaard in "Either/Or," "is essentially the expression of the confidence that man by God's assistance is lighter than the whole world, the same sort of faith which makes it possible for a man to swim." But for Sartre the confidence to cope with forces beyond man's ken must be found within this limited creature's own subjectivity. Does he find himself being turned into a meaningless object by industrial society? Have life and religion lost the relish of immediate experience? Does he grope helplessly through an ominous dark "where ignorant armies clash by night"? Very well, says Sartre the humanist: My good man, extricate yourself. It's as easy as that. "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. You're free, choose, that is, invent." He forgets that the devices and desires of man's own heart have brought him to his present impasse, that sooner or later rudderless ships go aground.

Jean-Paul Sartre: "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. You're free, choose, that is, invent."

Sartre is no library philosopher but one who has seen the Parisian underworld to its most degraded depths. He is at least a life in motion and will have no truck with static balcony views. For him reality cannot be understood by the analytic speculations of withdrawn minds but only as it strikes home in the immediate personal experience of the existing individual. Man is a passionate and suffering being, not a dehumanized instrument of pure reason. That far he would go with the Christian Existentialists. But he binds himself to the earth when he casts away his fourth and infinite dimension. He has lost Kierkegaard's "pregnant moment," in which eternity touches time and necessitates a destiny decision, and now has nothing to offer but cardboard figures.

"There can be no other truth to take off from than this: I think; therefore, I exist." But there is a greater truth revealed: God thinks; therefore, I exist. Sartre's lecture is a valiant attempt to reestablish man's freedom and dignity without God, but where "a man is nothing else than a series of undertakings," where his ultimate end is oblivion, neither is possible. Faith in resurrection, new life for death's captives, must come first.

There is a gigantic self-esteem at the core of the individual which must be shattered by despair, says Kierkegaard, before a man facing the riddles of existence can see the truth: that he is doomed unless God can somehow step into his life and retrieve him; that only he who of himself can do nothing is a fit mate for Him who can do everything; that when he is unable to undertake the least enterprise without divine aid, then each moment can hold an indubitable experience of the presence of the living God. Thus it is that man's continuing need of his Maker constitutes his highest perfection, and what seemed his defeat, he finds, is really his victory.

In the "Edifying Discourses" Kierkegaard writes: "It is God Himself who best knows how to utilize a man's own anxieties for the purpose of extirpating all his self-confidence; and when he is about to sink down into his own nothingness, it is again God Himself who can best keep him from continuing to maintain a diver's under-water connection with his earthly self." But Jean-Paul Sartre is doing just that. Far below the surface, in the deeps of despair, he clings frantically to his ego, mistaking it for a life preserver.

Oliver Barres is a student at Yale Divinity School.

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Poems with Interior Music

THE BURNING MOUNTAIN. By John Gould Fletcher. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 1947. 96 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by RAYMOND HOLDEN

WHEN a man has written almost a score of volumes of poetry during a period of some thirty-five years, has been an outstanding member of a distinguished literary group, has won the Pulitzer Prize and been able to devote his life to his work, it may be said that he has achieved a measure of success.

John Gould Fletcher won the Pulitzer Prize for his "Selected Poems" in 1938. During the so-called revival of poetry between 1912 and 1916 he was a member of the more glamorous than durable "imagist" group with H. D., Richard Aldington, and Amy Lowell. He now presents his seventeenth book of poems, "The Burning Mountain," and with it an opportunity to judge his work in the light of the present state of poetry which, though revived in 1912, seems to have succumbed to a tendency not to stay revived.

Mr. Fletcher is a poet whose work is concerned somewhat more, it seems, with the canons of art than with a direct relationship of the contemplations of the individual spirit to the problems of its world. He has often used musical terms in referring a form to his work and here in "The Burning Mountain" the arrangement and balance of his work suggests music. Yet, curiously, in the core and substance of what he writes the likeness to music is not apparent.

"Symphony of Snow" and "Flood Symphony" are interesting evidences of this. In the first there is an irregularly cadenced melancholy, the work of one who makes it plain that it has taken a great many years to learn to write like John Gould Fletcher, but who also makes it plain that the labor of those years has taken some of the surprised abandon from the poet's recreation of his observed and apprehended material. "Flood Symphony" is similar stuff, a kind of stately didacticism which states, rather than creates, relationships between the natural environment and man's destiny. "The Fallen Woods," like the two poems already mentioned, relates with considerable dignity the New England hurricane of 1938 to that other storm which, in 1940, laid low the majestic bole of France. Here is Mr. Fletcher at his current best, here and in "The Builders of the Bridge," and at his best there is an interior music which, though it seems to lack force and vitality, does suggest the rounded fullness of song, song with an impulse not merely to hum a tune but to convey an awareness, a sound of meaning.

The poems in this book cover a period of ten years and are arranged, presumably, in order of composition. The reader may trace through them the poet's consciousness of the world, spiritual, intellectual, and politic, in which he lives. The impression they give is one of a form of aloofness—which sometimes leaves the mind of the reader unsatisfied. The range is limited, the emotion not always apparent, the thought not so much obscure as vague and incompletely disciplined.

An entire book of poems written in Mr. Fletcher's manner suffers from lack of variety and from a want, either real or apparent, of the potential difference between high and low pressure. There is a tendency to feel, reading "The Burning Mountain," that many of the poems are exercises in practice for the writing of the others. Mr. Fletcher's notable work has always suffered from a lack of sharpness and conciseness and there is evidence of the same weakness here, yet this book is an honest, and earnest and dignified achievement.

Robert Frost's "Intricate Simplicity"

STEEPLE BUSH. By Robert Frost. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1947. 62 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by LEONARD BACON

THE hill pastures of "the one state of ours that is a shire" are in season apt to be full of spiraea tomentosa, alias hardhack, alias steeple bush. Outsiders hardly notice the close-packed Gothic panicles, but the native and the enlightened summer visitor recognize a strict and upright beauty in the vertical spikes, to which more spectacular flowers can lay no claim. Nor could any flower be a better symbol for what someone has called Mr. Frost's "intricate simplicity."

There are forty-three poems in this little volume, most of them brief and all of them interesting for one reason or another. There is no falling off. There has been no resting on oars or on laurels. And we can still thank God for the "barbed image," the penetrating wisdom, the inconspicuous grace that half conceals its own elegance, and the lancinating wit.

And we can thank God for something else. It was said of some Frenchman that while his rivals thought about writing, he wrote about thinking. This hits off Mr. Frost quite well. He is the most careful of workmen, but he always has something worth his while to work on. Any one of his poems is the incarnation or symbol of something completed in the mind. It may involve philosophies. It will force you to draw conclusions. You must decide yes or no. It isn't strange that Lucretius appears several times in these pages. Lucretius shared that passion for the explicit and the clear. He too hoped that he would not be misunderstood in what he meant. And he apparently meant to mean. Certainly Mr. Frost does. And yet for all the sober almost mathematical approach, where in all our American scene is there such a burning?

The reviewer might easily have written a formal notice of "Steeple Bush." He could have dwelt with pleasure on the bewildering beauty and the extraordinary evocation of mystery from the familiar which characterizes "Directive," a poem impossible to forget once it is read. The sharp imagery of "An Unstamped Letter," the savage satire of "Etherealization," all such matters a respectable critic should deal with justly, not forgetting to supply the poet with a ready-made system of esthetics and some good advice as to his future artistic conduct. This the present writer will not do. Mr. Frost is too great a poet.

Why not say so and be done with it?

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A New York "Red and Black"

MOON GAFFNEY. By Harry Sylvester. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1947. 289 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by BENJAMIN APPEL

THIS novel is a New York "Red and Black" in theme and sometimes in execution. Harry Sylvester is not a Stendhal, of course, but he is a serious writer with the courage to look at life in a large way, and to put down what he has seen. This is more of an accomplishment than may appear at first glance. In these slice-of-life literary times, the novel that analyzes life at more than one level is somewhat of a rarity. "Moon Gaffney" is not, despite the title, a one-character tale but the story of many characters: politicians, lawyers, priests, rich young women, radicals in the 1930's. Nearly all the characters are Irish Catholics and not since Stendhal has any writer so artistically depicted the differences between Catholicism as a spiritual force and Catholicism as a materialistic institution. Moon Gaffney, whose father is a deputy fire commissioner and a powerful politico, is an American Julien Sorel. Moon is not as articulate as Stendhal's hero but the parallel between the two is there. Moon is also ambitious, a rising politician; he is in line for assemblyman and even has hopes of becoming mayor of the greatest city in the world. What happens to Moon's ambitions is one of the many stories in the novel.

But the main story does not revolve about any character. The main story deals with Catholicism as it shapes, warps, and inspires Catholics. The basic structural weakness in the novel lies in the fact that the characters too often *talk* out their problems and difficulties rather than being shown inside the acting hours of their lives. The talk is good, often brilliant, in the light flashed on the characters, but the weight of it amounts to an over-balance. If Sylvester had shown more of Moon Gaffney in his workaday life as a politician, Bart Schneider as a reporter, etc., he would have written a very fine and, perhaps, even a great novel. As it is, he has written a sincere and good work, a very important novel, whose psychological insight cuts deep. He has portrayed his characters against the dark and terrible background of the times, in drift, aimless, seeking and unseeking, split human beings seeking for unity and wholeness. Moon Gaffney's story is the symbol for the others.

Moon Gaffney, a believing Catholic, worships Tammany Hall as the novel opens. He is young, without doubts, his future clear, his political progress inevitable. Some of his friends and acquaintances, Bart Schneider, James Kavanaugh, have radical views and they begin the "unease" in Moon's mind. Moon uneasily, unwillingly, visits the offices of the *Catholic Worker*, the paper of a group of Catholic radicals. Moon approved of Christmas baskets distributed at the club but was worried about breadlines. He who had charity in his make-up—"it could not have been said that he was a hater or even a fearer of Negroes" even though he felt a dislike for them—becomes involved with the club's activities. He is developing what "some might have called a neurosis, others a conscience." He sees for himself that some of the priests and monsignors of his Church are narrow men. Shocked, he is compelled to reappraise his values, to make judgments. "Never in memory had he been so completely confused and helpless." He recommends a young lawyer, McGuffey, to the *Catholic Worker* to represent a labor union in which there are prominent Communists. McGuffey's wife leaves him because she shares her father's opinion of her husband—that McGuffey is an enemy "not only of ourselves but of Holy Mother the Church."

Moon, still groping for an answer, runs into Jew-baiting among his friends, into the pro-fascists, into the central conflict of our time: the break-up of old values. At the wake for his father, he spiritually identifies himself, for the first time, with the askers of questions. He is shocked when Father Malone praises "the great Mussolini" and kneeling alone at his father's coffin weeps for the first time when he considers that "he must follow his father into the church while above them both the bingo banners flapped."

The death of his father as well as his own casual and almost accidental relation with the *Catholic Worker* ruin his chances in politics. He goes to see Father Malone who offers him a chance to redeem himself. "Join the organization fighting communism and its Jewish allies. . . . You know of Mussolini?" Moon retorts that to him Mussolini is "an awful flannel-mouth." He will have no part of fascism or of fascist priests, and it is only later that he realizes that Father Malone "spoke in no large or legitimate sense for the Church." Moon goes to work for the same labor union (to which he had sent McGuffey) as a Catholic who feels that love and not hatred should be the main spark of action on the earth. The sin of hatred has become the mortal sin. His first case for the union is the defense of three Negro unionists, one a Communist.

I have spelled out Moon's story in some detail because alone of all the stories in this sensitive work it is developed not only as to idea-content but as to dramatic-content. And because it indicates the dynamite of Sylvester's pages. He will be attacked by certain groups in his Church and certain groups outside it as courage and integrity have always been attacked. He is sympathetic to the Catholic radicals, but his book is essentially a religious work, because the radicalism has a religious base. The late Cardinal Mundelein, I think, would have liked this book and there is no doubt that America's "poor-man" and "working-man priests" in the factory towns and coal communities would be sympathetic to its central theme. I consider this novel must reading for any American curious about Catholicism in contemporary America.

Benjamin Appel is author of "The Dark Stain," "The People Talk," "The Power-House," and "Runaround."

Harry Sylvester's novel [is] "must reading for any American curious about Catholicism in contemporary America."

Acknowledgment

By Witter Bynner

WHILE Egypt still played naked by the Nile,
Before young Rome had seen the seven-fold smile,
I had acknowledged death, whereby I knew
Final dissolvement of my loving you
And the later loves of others who arrive
Doing their deeds, trying to be alive.

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Murder on a Low Plane

PRELUDE TO A CERTAIN MIDNIGHT. By Gerald Kersh. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1947. 249 pp. $2.50.

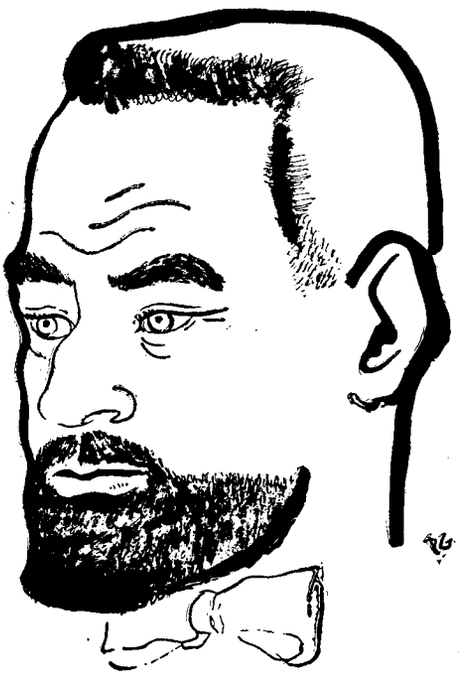
Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

GERALD KERSH has a talent for discovering the dark corners of city life and for creating outrageous characters who are plausible. Certainly "Prelude to a Certain Midnight" is peopled with nightmarish figures, creatures spawned by the back alleys and bars of London. They circle around Asta Thundersly, a wealthy lesbian whose strident voice is always raised in defense of some foolish cause or deep injustice, and around the old Baccus bar in a London side street. There is Catchy, who gave herself to any man who wanted to possess her, a true masochist at heart; there is a convincing detective inspector, a bartender, a prostitute or two, a down-at-the-heels religious fanatic, a prize-fighter butler, and a quiet little writer of thrillers and boys' books whose eyes it was always difficult to meet.

At last, Asta finds a cause worthy of her steel. The broken body of the eleven-year-old daughter of a neighborhood tailor is found one day in the crumbling cellar of an abandoned house. She had been raped, atrociously manhandled, and murdered. In the little apartment over the tailor shop Catchy lives and suffers from her lovers. The murderer is obviously one of the strange crew of debased men and women who are intimate of Asta's house. She uses all of her formidable powers to try to discover who killed the little Sabatini girl.

This more or less conventional plot for a thriller is given a fearsome kind of vitality by Mr. Kersh's thesis. He believes that this atrocious type of murder does not spring from a single source, that behind the rapist and torturer there is usually a woman who has given birth to and fed the evil in him, until however mild he may appear to be, he becomes as dangerous as a tiger thirsting for blood.

The novel progresses through a series of trenchant biographies of the score of men and women, any one of whom might be the criminal. Asta had already been outraged for months by the light sentence a cruel mother received who had beaten and tortured her child until she died. In her circle violence, despair, and lust are familiar obsessions. When she finds coal dust in the cuff of the mild little writer's trousers and realizes that he is the temporary lover of Catchy, that he is the dominating male who has recently beaten his woman, she has an insight into the truth. But unlike the usual murder story Mr. Kersh's grim narrative leaves the murderer free and at the end of the book he is seen calmly taking his nieces to the circus, where he watches with horrid absorption the equestrienne who might fall from her horse, the man walking the tightrope who for once might actually be as drunk as he pretends to be, or the artists perilously swinging from the high trapeze.



—*Paul Galdone.*

Gerald Kersh's "gift for overwriting is not improving [his] undoubted talents as a novelist. His cleverness is drowning his art."

The novel is worth while for the not unpleasant tingling it will produce along the reader's backbone, though it will not be conducive to pleasant walks in a city park at night. For the author of "Faces in a Dusty Picture," a remarkable first novel, it is a minor work. The plot itself is a contrivance and, in spite of the vividness with which he presents his characters, it seems incredible that so many dubious and frightening people could be assembled together under one roof. His remarkable flair for descriptive phrases becomes in the end too bizarre for comfort. Sentences like this leap at you out of the page. "Those bright, brown eyes that used to be so steady and candid against the baby-blue whites may now be likened to a couple of cockroaches desperately swimming in two saucers of boiled rhubarb." This is Catchy, the source of the evil. Of the old battle-axe of a reformer Mr. Kersh writes, "Imagine a retired middleweight boxer, turned gentleman farmer, impersonating his aunt; dressed in a coat and skirt." Actually, Asta is the only sympathetic character in the book; there is something noble in her passionate pursuit of villains. "An ill-used child sends her out like a roaring lion. For a pregnant housemaid she will tear down half the town." But this gift for overwriting, for the brilliant phrase or symbol is not improving Mr. Kersh's undoubted talents as a novelist. His own cleverness is drowning his art.

The black and white drawing of the author on the cover of the book reveals him with a somewhat sinister haircut, a unique black beard that would mark him as a dangerous man to introduce to any girl's school, and a pair of staring eyes. There is something symbolic about this portrait, for it is drawn in the manner in which Mr. Kersh paints his characters, sharp, vivid, and exotic.

*The Prince Siddartha**

By Katharine Day Little

ASH-grey the sculptured stone that sings his shape
Rippling into a suavity of muted chords,
Flowing like music falls the silken cape
About the dreaming form. From this young lord's
Delicate hand, bent head, there still escapes
Sorrow and wonder fated to form in words
Earliest Buddhist wisdom; that heart will awake
Shielded in vain from death and sound of swords.

Nirvana flowered from a trance like this,
The golden-hearted lotus petals curled
Into his thoughts. Perfume of sacrifice
Of marigold and jasmine filled his world.
The fluted cloak ripples along the stone—
A young prince treads the Eight-fold Way alone.

**Lung-Wei bas-relief in Boston Museum of Fine Arts.*

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Guts and Conscience

EDITOR'S NOTE: *While the following dialogue is cast in "fictional" form, the incidents referred to in that portion of the conversation relating to the Norwalk Petition are authentic.*

"BETTER not come too close or I'll contaminate you," warned my friend, the Connecticut farmer. "I've got political smallpox.

"You needn't look so surprised," he went on. "Haven't you heard? They've got me tagged as a Comm-yoon-ist because I've been out collecting signatures for the Norwalk Petition."

"Hold on," I protested. "I've heard about the Norwalk Petition, and it's absurd that anyone could link it with anything remotely Communist. As I understand it, the people of Norwalk —some 15,000 of them—have mobilized behind a petition calling upon the United States to propose amendments to the United Nations that will really give it some ginger. You want the U.N. to have compulsory jurisdiction through preponderant force if necessary. I suppose that the problem, if anything, is how to get the Russians to agree. How can anyone twist that into a Commie conspiracy? You can't be serious."

"Well, actually only a half dozen or so people I've tried to get to sign it have accused me of being in cahoots with Joseph Stalin, but the reckless way public sentiment on the Communist issue is being stirred up nowadays, there's no telling what I'll run into next.

"Just yesterday a woman grabbed a batch of petition sheets from under my arm, tore them into confetti, and flung the scraps in my face before I even knew what was happening. Must have been some eighty signatures on them, too.

"Now, even before the campaign swung into the active canvassing stage, we agreed at petition headquarters not to blow our tops in case anything like this happened. If anyone got nasty about the petition, we weren't to let on even if we were all fried up inside. The idea was to try to win everyone over. We had to do this if we were to get the names of at least four out of five Norwalkers to sign.

"And so, confronted by this hornet of a female, acid still dripping from her stinger, I demobilized my fury. I carefully flicked the torn strips from my hat and collar, in the meanwhile making some mental calculation of the hours and brain fatigue it would take to replace those precious signatures. I suggested that she might have been misinformed. We wanted to abolish the veto, I told her, and then make it impossible for nations to walk out, as Germany and Italy and Japan did from the old League. We wanted to be in a position to apprehend war criminals before they tore the world down, rather than go through another Nuremberg.

"These facts sieved through her as though she were the original hoop. 'Look lady,' I said, suddenly thinking of a trump card. 'The *New York Herald Tribune* has given us page-one attention, has reported this thing thoroughly, praised us in an editorial, and even spent several hundred dollars in printing large posters for us to use in connection with the petition. There's a *Trib* poster in that store window right in back of you. It tries to dramatize the challenge of atomic energy. Now you don't think the Republican *Herald Tribune* would be taken in by a Communist plot?'

"'Taken in!' hissed my inquisitor, coiling for a fresh spring. 'Why, of course the *Herald Tribune* is Communist. I've known it for years. They were taken in by Willkie and now they're being taken in by Stassen. They're even more Communist than the Jewish *New York Times*!'

"You know, sometimes the only thing that keeps a fellow from murder is that suddenly an argument will take an absurd and comic twist; and when the explosion comes, it isn't violence that bursts forth but a geyser of belly laughs.

"This display startled the lady somewhat; I guess she was prepared for anything except my vigorous enjoyment. She drew off, her eyes flashing up and down over me the way you look over your bank statement at the end of the month.

"Then she moved into attacking formation again. 'Just as I supposed,' she snorted. 'Who but a Communist would act that way in front of a lady?'

"So saying, she bristled off.

* * *

"It seemed funny at the time, but it didn't seem funny later—especially when you came across four or five other people who felt pretty much the same as she did. Fortunately, none of them used her blitzkrieg tactics, and I had no additional signature casualties. In two or three cases, what had happened was that the people were only reflecting the violent anti-Communist crusade sweeping the country.

"Now I don't have to tell you that I regard the American Communist as a miserable and contemptuous form of under-the-rock political life. But I also know that the present witch hunt is blind, unreasoning, and dangerous. I know how easily and conveniently the dragnet widens. I know how readily the crusade moves from the Communists to those charged with being 'Communistic'—a marvelous catchall that means anything the hunters want it to mean. And anyone who has ever allowed his gaze to rest upon a single liberal idea will be hunted down with the rest. Besides, he happens to be the real target.

"How do you deal with American Communists? It's not easy, but I do know that you certainly can't get at them by a campaign of hysteria or by driving them underground. I'd rather have them within reach, know where they are, and what they are doing. I'd rather have them in the open filling out so many forms and reports that March 15 would seem like a day of soulful contemplation by contrast.

"But even that doesn't begin to do the real job. The real job is fighting Communism in America can only be done by freeing ourselves of the

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things that give Communism its big chance. An America with enough guts and conscience—and the two must go together—to tackle its problems honestly and openly need not quiver with fright at the mention of Communism.

"The best way to look healthy is to be healthy. If you want to protect our youngsters against Communism, you don't do it by forbidding them to think about it or read about it or talk about it or know people who are part of it. You do it by laying all the facts on the table—the political facts of life, and the age to begin depends upon the political and social curiosity of the youngster himself. And unless those facts can tell truthfully of a sound and progressive America, an America in which there is enough opportunity to go around for those who want it, deserve it, and prize it, then no amount of official or unofficial anti-Communist hysteria will keep our children from becoming Communists, whether underground, overground, or in the stratosphere.

"One more thing about this electrically charged anti-Communist atmosphere—and this has something to do with the Norwalk Petition. This country is rapidly being divided between those who have given up all hope of avoiding war with Russia and who therefore are getting ready to fight it, and those who believe that war can and must be outlawed, knowing what another war would mean. The thousands of Norwalk citizens—of all parties and denominations—who have come together with a single voice have asked that the world agency charged with the responsibility for averting such a war be given the machinery necessary to do so. They believe that this country has the opportunity and the obligation to advance the strengthening proposals.

"But they know, too, that the atmosphere in which these proposals are made is of almost equal importance with the proposals themselves.

"Day by day, reciprocal fear and suspicion and contempt on both sides are mounting. In both America and Russia the war of words against each other is well under way. In both countries, combustible blunders are being piled up in the holy name of security and sovereignty, though the two are as incompatible as milk and vinegar. A rim of inevitability has been forming and is beginning to harden.

"But I don't propose to see our lives abbreviated if we can possibly help it—and I should hate to think that we can't help it. That is why I think the time has come to put aside the hot needles and get out the cold compressors." N. C.

Return

By Haniel Long

YOU were at the wheel of the car again, and we three
Recalled our other ride with you to the State U.,
Before the war came, before the long drought came,
When horses and sheep were pastured on these plains,
So many of them it was hard to believe, in a summer big with rains,
The mesas green, not this desolate brown.
Now you were home from the years of marking time, of learning patience,
Of mastering that delicate, strong, last-learned tool
That builds men out of creeping days and empty horizons.

The sun sank lower, angled towards Mt. Taylor,
Went down, touched the dust of the horizon
With yellow and orange, changed the terrible Sandía
Into hooded enfoldings of dusty rose.
We drew into Albuquerque, then into Mrs. Ferguson's garden.
The full moon followed us beneath the cottonwoods,
Followed us into the house through windows, through vines;
Hung up a lantern inside with us.

In front of the fire after supper, Erna began to talk
About a Cuban whose name we had never heard before—
Jose Martí—at seventeen set to breaking rock
For conspiring against Spain, the slavemaster . . .
Then years of exile on the Continent, in South America, in New York . . .
Learning the manifold and intricate uses of patience,
The last-learned tool, that builds men out of empty horizons . . .
Exhorting . . . raising money . . . building morale
Among fellow exiles . . . writing for the newspapers . . .
Writing book after book for Cubans. And when the moment came
Going back to his island, no soldier or officer, merely going back
With the rebels . . . killed in the first battle . . . by the first bullet . . .

Twenty years later, out of silence, his fame coming up
Like a white lantern out of dusk.
And now, it appeared, Martí was warm in the hearts of Cubans.
They called him the "Apostle," the "Saint of the Americas."
He had wished his Cuba free of Spain, and of her own generals too;
Had wished her strength to lie in each ordinary Cuban,
Black or brown or white; had wished it with mystical fervor
Fed by deep springs.

There, by the fire, on the threshold of your return to your studies,
Knowing now what you could do with knowledge, what your target was,
After the school of patience on the lonely island,
You were not surprised by the Cubans' turning to Martí
Though they could easily have dressed up a human zero
And picked from two dozen generals their Hero.
And I saw that you had joined the men who know what to live for and die for—
Had crossed from those whose desires are two-, three-, or four-sided
To the camp of the others, whose attention is no longer divided.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Freedom from Religion?

SIR: Kenneth Stewart's editorial-review of "A Free and Responsible Press [*SRL*, Apr. 5] titled "Press R: Faith Healing?", was a satisfactory review, but I believe there are quite a few people besides myself who find fault with the editorial part of the piece.

The fault is not with Mr. Stewart's main thesis, that Henry Luce's magazines are as much the target of the book reviewed as any other magazine, newspaper or chain. But the argumentation used to prove the point—there is the rub!

Mr. Stewart knows the Achilles' heel of the Luce publications—their interpretation of facts and the determination of public opinion under the guise of mere presentation of facts. "Joe Blow is a bum and here is his ugly picture to prove it." A small orchid to Mr. Stewart for his insight.

But Mr. Stewart brought me up rather sharply with, "—we can remind Mr. Luce that freedom for religion also means freedom from religion." O no, you can't. Not in a world created by an omnipotent God. The man who prints a newspaper is just another man: to him I can say, "Phooey!" But the Lord of the universe is an entirely different sort of Person.

FRANCIS K. WALLACE.

St. Marys, Kan.

"Grown a lot though, hasn't it?"

"Nature and Man"

SIR: So far as I can understand Robert Bierstedt's flippant review of a major new philosophical work, Paul Weiss's "Nature and Man" [*SRL* Apr. 12], Mr. Bierstedt objects to the work on the following grounds:

1. It violates common sense, by holding that

A. *Everything in the Universe is something from the outside and on the outside, on the inside and from the inside.* But when I say that my manners are good, but that I have a bad character, I am saying that I am something on the outside (well-mannered), from the outside (observable as well mannered), on the inside (evil), and from the inside (a sensitive acquaintance could discern that I was evil).

B. *Everything in the Universe comes to be as the result of a free course, whose outcome is necessary.* But if I have to decide whether or not to go for a walk, I do not have (so certainly is the view of common sense) to decide one way or the other. But once I have decided, and gone for the walk, I cannot unmake the decision or the act of walking.

C. *Everything (including butter) has privacy.* But when I cut a piece of butter, I am cutting something, not nothing. To hold that butter has privacy is to hold that it is something with its own characteristic structure, not merely a creature of my or any one else's desires.

D. *Every-day living beings come from non-living beings in myriads.* But I take it that the theory of evolution is now respectable. If beings could emerge once from the non-living to the living state, why not now?

Professor Weiss thus justifies, rather than contradicts, common sense.

2. It unscientifically contradicts the scientists. But in the first place many of the issues discussed are ignored by the scientists. In the second place it is the philosopher's duty to be a critic of the sciences. Long before Einstein, one of the best critics of Newton was George Berkeley, a philosopher and a bishop.

3. It is philosophical in the genuine sense, is unconventional, and requires hard work in order to be understood. What would Mr. Bierstedt like — a rival to Launcelot Hogben or Kathleen Winsor?

There are undoubtedly defects in "Nature and Man," and I think I know some of them. Mr. Bierstedt clearly does not.

ELI KARLIN.

New Haven, Conn.

On the Right Side

SIR: I don't think I have ever written a fan letter about a book review. But I have just read your review of Fritz von Unruh's novel "The End Is Not Yet" [*SRL* May 31] and want to tell you that I think it is a penetrating and very important statement. You criticize more than this book when you speak so correctly about "reducing the enemy," representing him as "entirely a fantasy" and making of recent history an "improbability." What a pity that other reviews are sometimes, consciously or unconsciously, so much on the other side!

FREDERIC WERTHAM.

New York, N. Y.

A Virgilian Answer

SIR: In partial answer to Dr. DeWolfe Howe's delightful Virgilian question [*SRL* Apr. 19] the antique Bowling Green, in the *SRL* of about a dozen years ago, suggested as an inscription for Rockefeller Center (then as now better known as Radio City) the similar line, Aeneid VI, 850: *"Describent Radio et Surgentia Sidera Dicent."*

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Roslyn Heights, N. Y.

Comprehensive Reading

SIR: May I nominate as the perfect reading for Rutherford Platt's long voyage to the Far North "The Practical Cogitator or Thinker's Anthology," selected by Curtis and Greenslet (Houghton Mifflin, 1945). It holds so much representative wisdom of the world's great minds and so much to set the reader wrestling with his own thoughts that I can recall no other single book so fitted to his need.

C. M. MCMILLAN.

Boulder, Colo.

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Our Literary Inheritance

THE SHAPERS OF AMERICAN FICTION, 1798-1947. By George Snell. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1947. 303 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by MAXWELL GEISMAR

THIS work traces the development of our literature from "its weak, imitative beginnings to its present eminence and originality" in about 300 pages. As a rule, such books represent the best that has been thought and said by everybody else on the same subject. But the present survey has enough points of interest to escape from this unhappy category.

Mr. Snell has divided up his novelists into what he calls the four chief lines of literary inheritance. Among the "Romantics" J. Fenimore Cooper stands in solitary grandeur, like his own Natty Bumppo. The "Apocalyptics" include Charles Brockden Brown, Poe, Melville, and Faulkner. The "Temperamentists" range from Washington Irving and Hawthorne to Henry James, Hemingway, Wolfe, and Steinbeck. The "Realists" open with Howells, Twain, and Dreiser, and close with Dos Passos, Caldwell, and James T. Farrell, among others.

These classifications, as Mr. Snell says, are not rigid and are primarily, perhaps, for the sake of convenience in treating complex literary trends and temperaments. John Dos Passos, in spite of his "realistic" novels, is probably just as much of an "Apocalyptic" artist as Melville. The work of Tom Wolfe, the perfect example of a "temperamentist" to the common eye, will probably survive on the basis of its realism and satire. Furthermore, a strict emphasis on these four lines of literary descent would ignore the dominant influence on the last half-century of American writing: the rapidly changing social and economic patterns of American life itself.

Yet Mr. Snell's four categories of native fiction are valuable. They illuminate some obscure phases of the work of our best novelists, and they bring out some new connections between a series of apparently disparate individuals. Charles Brockden Brown, for example, takes on a fresh interest as the ancestor of the "Apocalyptics." And what "The Shapers of American Fiction" does show very clearly is the importance of this tradition in a national literature that has been generally considered to be simple, direct, pragmatic, and "innocent." The "bloody footstep" of Hawthorne's work, the "white shroud" of Melville's, the sealed-in chambers and tottering mansions of Poe's tales, as well as of Scott Fitzgerald's and Faulkner's, or the profound sense of disintegration and evil at the very base of Henry James's work: these, much more than that "smiling aspect" of life, are typical of our literature.

Mr. Snell is sensitive to the implications and ramifications of the Apocalyptic School, and probably his best studies (Poe, Melville, Faulkner) are done in this framework of values. By way of contrast, the sections on the native realists and naturalists are the weakest in the book, partly because Mr. Snell himself is more concerned with literary influences than with the historical scene through which his novelists are moving. For some curious reason both Sherwood Anderson and Sinclair Lewis are omitted here, while James T. Farrell is given inordinate praise. Nor is there a mention of Richard Wright.

On the whole, though, while "The Shapers of American Fiction" is not a distinctive work of literary criticism, it is an intelligent and very readable introduction to some of the major figures in our letters.

Maxwell Geismar, author of "Writers in Crisis," has just finished the second volume of his series on American novelists.

A Strange Sort of War Casualty

IN A YELLOW WOOD. By Gore Vidal. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1947. 216 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

THIS is a surprisingly effective novel, for the small scope within which it is so deliberately set. Everything about it—the time and place, the action, the characters, certainly the dramatic intention—has been consciously limited. It is a small composition. And yet each note in it is struck with such clear authority that the book is evocative throughout of an impression of truth and vitality larger than itself. At the center of things is Robert Holton, an ex-soldier who has found work in a New York brokerage house. We follow him through but one day of his civilian life: awakening and breakfast and the office; business and social contacts; a party at night; a visit to one of the more dubious night clubs and a view of its perverse habitues; a flashing interlude of passion, a decision almost made, and thrust aside; and then sleep.

Through this short sequence pass other figures, gliding in and out like fish in a stream. These, apart from their own brief entity, serve chiefly to suggest the planes and dimensions of Holton's personality; they mirror him forward and backward, give him more of definitive shading than our twenty-four-hour view of him can provide. Among them—the girls, clerks, brokerage-men, casual strangers—two loom up to state the book's theme, to link it with its quoted title from Frost's poem ("Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, And sorry I could not travel both, And be one traveler . . ."). Jim, a fellow Holton had served with, comes in for a visit, and notes, as no one else can, the change in him. The shrinkage, the loss in specific weight, as though spirit were an element that has dried out of him.

And Carla, whom he had once loved, comes all the way from Italy to find the same thing. For one brief hour she does almost awaken him again to an awareness of expansive freedom. It is a moment of choice trembling in the balance. They can return together to Italy; Holton can lift himself bodily out of this routine that he hates with one dying part of him. But the choice was made before she came. Early in the book Holton remarks to someone: "I don't want anything; didn't you know that?" He has already taken the path in the wood, away from wanting, toward drugged not-knowing. He is a strange, oblique sort of war casualty.

Mr. Vidal's writing is a first-rate example of controlled naturalism. It looks easy, but I should say it is a product of concentrated workmanship, a rigid and painstaking selection of details plus a delicacy of understatement that reaps its delicacy of overtone. The impression of the book is that every word tells, and has been considered for its significance. It is a small work, of marked talent.

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Seeing Things

WORDS AND MUSIC

THERE are people who have ears and yet have no ear. In their persons the have's and have-not's merge. They are not deaf, except to music. The glories of the language do not elude them. Words are their orchestras, words the only music they understand. They are as insensitive to harmony and counterpoint as they are sensitive to diction.

Charles Lamb, a rare master of verbal melody, was one of these. He had an ear—for words; as fine and subtle an ear as English prose can boast. It was only music that found him hard of hearing. To noises he was constitutionally susceptible. The pounding of a carpenter's hammer on a warm noon could fret him into midsummer madness. Yet, by his own admission, such unconnected, unset sounds as these were to him in no way as distracting as what he called "the measured malice of music."

To be sure, Elia's heart had been melted at "the concourse of sweet sounds." He even thought that he was *sentimentally* disposed to harmony. *Organically,* however, he was incapable of a tune. It embarrassed him to realize that, though his loyalty as an Englishman was unimpeachable, he had never been able either to whistle or hum "God Save the King."

What disturbed Lamb in music was that his ear could not be passive to it as it was to the single strokes of a carpenter. His ear was always striving to "thrid the maze" like "an unskilled eye painfully poring over hieroglyphics." He confessed he had sat through an Italian opera until for sheer pain he had "rushed out into the noisiest places of the crowded streets to solace" himself with sounds which he was not "obliged to follow."

Elia was a word-man, not a note-man. If opera could turn him into a refugee, instrumental music could fill him with even greater anguish. "Words are something," wrote he, "but to be exposed to an endless battery of mere sounds; . . . to fill up sound with feeling, and strain ideas to keep pace with it; to gaze on empty frames, and be forced to make the pictures for yourself; . . . to invent extempore tragedies to answer to the vague gestures of an inexplicable rambling mime"—these were experiences which plagued and embittered his apprehension.

Lamb was not the first nor the last dramatic critic to be deaf, if not allergic, to ambitious music. There have been exceptions, of course. The arts no less than nature and modern warfare know their amphibians. Shaw was as brilliant in the concert hall or the opera house as he was in the theatre. Huneker could switch with equal ease from a drama to a score. So could Philip Hale and H. T. Parker. So, more recently, could Gilbert Gabriel. So at the present time can Claudia Cassidy in Chicago and John Rosenfield in Dallas. But, in addition to not hearing ear-to-ear, most dramatic critics and most music critics do not see eye-to-eye. Their reports on the same music drama are apt to be as dissimilar as those of the three blind men when confronted with the same elephant.

As a case in point, consider the Ballet Society's recent productions on Broadway of Gian-Carlo Menotti's "The Telephone" and "The Medium."* Both of these works had previously been presented uptown on a double bill at the Heckscher Theatre. Both, when so given, had been reviewed as music by music critics.

Downtown these two operas faced a different jury, and were bound to be tried by different standards. They had invaded the realm of the show-shops. They had arrived as innovators in a district where routine musicals not only number their thousands of devotees but have their vociferous champions. They had come into that domain where a hummable melody, a catchy tune, or, if your prefer, a song hit is apt to be the highest musical expectation.

Not far from them was Ethel Merman ("Doing What Comes Naturally") in "Annie Get Your Gun." They had become near neighbors of Victor Herbert's "Sweethearts" and Bobby Clark, a fellow who, though he has earned bay leaves of his own, has not caused Melchior to look to his laurels. They were competing with such enchanting musical comedies as "Oklahoma!," "Carousel," "Finian's Rainbow," and "Brigadoon," all of which marked healthy advances in

**THE TELEPHONE (a curtain-raiser) and THE MEDIUM (a tragedy in two acts). Music, book, and lyrics by Gian-Carlo Menotti. Settings and costumes by Horace Armistead. The Ballet Society's production directed by Mr. Menotti. Presented by Chandler Cowles and Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., in association with Edith Lutyens. With a cast including Marie Powers, Evelyn Keller, Leo Coleman, Beverly Dame, Virginia Beeler, Marilyn Cotlow, and Frank Rogier. At the Ethel Barrymore Theatre.*

—*Talbot.*

"Equal to Marie Powers's virtuosity as a contralto was her authority as an actress."

the popular taste, but each of which was still safely this side of opera. The most pretentious musical rival faced by "The Telephone" and "The Medium" was Kurt Weill's "Street Scene," the score of which many hardened Broadwayites had relished whenever it took to the familiar Broadway idiom of song, and nodded over during its operatic interludes.

Mr. Menotti's music dramas had, in short, deserted Olympus for the market-place. In the process they were bound to suffer a high C-change. They were now being displayed as theatre in the theatrical district. Inevitably, what they were as drama mattered as much as, if not more than, what they were as music. Hence it was that dramatic critics rather than music critics were this time invited to cover them.

I HAVE before me the notices written by Virgil Thomson and Olin Downes of the Heckscher Theatre performances of "The Telephone" and "The Medium." Since I, like some of my confreres in the Drama Critics Circle, share Lamb's musical deafness and feel woefully unequipped to consider Mr. Menotti's music-dramas as music, it seems only fair to turn to these reviews before reporting on Mr. Menotti's works as dramas.

Mr. Thomson, an admirable music critic and as readable an analyst as any contemporary art can boast, saluted both of Mr. Menotti's productions as "first-class musico-theatrical works." "The Telephone" he described in the *Herald Tribune* as "an opera buffa, light and full of laughter." He found it "gay and funny and completely humane." "The Medium" was to him "a tragedy in melodramatic vein that is the most gripping operatic narrative [he] has witnessed in many

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ALL MY SONS
by ARTHUR MILLER
Staged by ELIA KAZAN
with BETH MERRILL
Arthur KENNEDY Ed BEGLEY
CORONET Thea. 49th St. W. of B'way. CI. 6-8870
Eves. 8:40. Mats. Dec. Day, Sat. & Wed. 2:40

a year. . . . [It] wrings every heart string, and the music is thoroughly touching." He admired both operas for their "straightforward humanity," applauding this as "a welcome note of sincerity in contemporary operatic composition."

Mr. Downes, who commands an inexhaustible fund of musical knowledge, also acclaimed "The Telephone" as both "good theatre throughout and lively, tuneful music." In his phrase it was "very amusing, done dexterously and with a light touch." As he saw and heard it, "The Medium" was a "shilling shocker with overtones of mystery, Freud, and the Grand Guignol." Mr. Downes thought that, whether Mr. Menotti utilized "ideas of his own or ideas which he has absorbed from Puccini, Ravel Rimsky-Korsakoff, and other composers," we had in "The Medium" the "quality of opera." According to Mr. Downes in *The Times*, it was "dramatic music, emphatic in action as well as feeling, and in essence song, which is what opera must be."

Honesty compels me to admit that I cannot agree with my musical betters on the subject of "The Telephone." That it was "light," yes. But that it was "amusing," no. From a theatrical point of view it was a comedy about as depressing as a fat woman in slacks and as unstylish as any male wearing one of those appalling creations known no less appallingly as "leisure coats." Mr. Menotti's curtain-raiser was a little trifle in which a man tries to propose to a woman so wedded to the telephone that he can never get his proposal spoken until he has left her apartment and telephones her himself from the station.

As a plot idea, this certainly did not hold a half-hour's entertainment. Although it was pretty old stuff to begin with, even if had been new it would have seemed old at the end of that time. In a revue it would have exhausted itself in from three to five minutes, and often has. This was precisely what it did in opera form, too, only I discovered it also exhausted me.

Let me carry my confession further. Perhaps my regard for music is too high. This can happen in the case of ignorance. But when a woman has to resort to song and depend upon an orchestra's aid to get off such a line as "Let me go and get a handkerchief," I find myself laughing not with the libretto but at the basic conventions of opera.

FURTHERMORE, the book's dubious joke about the telephone was not made the more irresistible by the high-school proficiency with which

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the playlet was set; the non-professional quality of Mr. Menotti's direction; or by the amateurish and unengaging manner in which its two characters were acted (mind you, I don't presume to say *sung*) by Frank Rogier and Marilyn Cotlow.

Nobody loves the telephone more than I do. When it comes, however, to having to listen to someone trill, "Hello, hellO, HELLO" into it and follow these fluted salutations with no less chirrupy trivialities, why then I almost lament the birth of Alexander Graham Bell. Perhaps it was the telephone strike that jaundiced my judgment. Or perhaps it was just that theatre people, not knowing the language of music, are unable to laugh at little nifties got off in the score which musicians apparently find funny as hell. Anyone whose French is of the menu variety, and who, so as not to appear either a killjoy or a fool, has faced the dilemma of summoning a sickly smile at a joke told in idiomatic French he does not understand, must know what I mean.

THE Medium" confronted me with no such problem. Even as one of the earless, I found it exciting in Mr. Downes's and Mr. Thomson's fashion, though no doubt for different reasons. During most of its two acts I was left unbothered by its mixture of music and drama. Their marriage in this instance was no misalliance. To each of them it may have been a convenience, but it seemed natural; in fact, almost inevitable. It never challenged belief by making acceptance impossible. It contrived to interest a playgoer as theatre at the same time that it satisfied the note-men as music. Deaf (in the musical sense) as I am, I responded to Mr. Menotti's score and felt its rightness for its book.

In "The Medium" Mr. Menotti was telling what Mr. Downes accurately designated in theatrical parlance as a shilling shocker with overtones of mystery and the Grand Guignol.

"Sneak" and background music are old allies of melodrama on the stage, and familiar ones on the screen and radio. Here, though palpably of a higher order and of a more ambitious and creative scope, Mr. Menotti's score served the same complementary purpose. Without music his story might well have been laughable, just as without words his music would have been incomprehensible. But they fused with arresting results.

They fused to tell a violent tale about an old medium, a faker, who is finally unnerved and driven to murder by the deceptions which are her trade. She panders to that ultimate hunger of grief-stricken survivors by pretending to bring back to them the voices or visions of their loved ones. An unexplained hand clasped around her throat in the darkness of a seance unnerves her. Although she tries to persuade her customers she has tricked them, so poignant is their hope that they are unwilling to believe her. Thereafter, when he refuses to indicate it was his hand which touched her in the darkness, she murders the mute gypsy boy who lives with her and has fallen in love with her daughter.

Judged by purely dramatic standards, the production given "The Medium" was so superior to the one to which "The Telephone" was exposed that it was incredible to find the two operas on one bill. Horace Armistead, whose background for the curtain-raiser had the professional touch of a "Compliments of a Friend" advertisement in a school yearbook, supplied Mr. Menotti's melodrama with a setting of genuine distinction. It was a shadowy garret; sordid, dark, and fearsome; a place of terror. It was the kind of room meant for ghosts and bats and cobwebs that Charles Addams draws.

Mr. Menotti's own direction, which was nonexistent in his short light opera, also suddenly became sure an contributive. Mr. Rogier, who was ver Straw Hat circuit in "The Telephone, succeeded as one of the mourning par ents in "The Medium" in creating a effective character. Although Evely Keller as the daughter and especiall Leo Coleman who had to writhe elo quently as the mute were both accept able by Broadway notions, the eve ning's real performance — and performance of unusual merit it wa —was given by Marie Powers.

It was Miss Powers, of course, wh played the squalid, red-wigged, bottle swigging old harridan of the opera title. Equal to her virtuosity as contralto (I dare say this only be cause Mr. Downes and Mr. Thomso said it first) was her authority as a actress. From the moment she emerge up the stairs it was apparent that player who is mistress of her cra had entered. The better-stock com panies, and I mean this only as a com pliment, used to include performe who could take command of a stag and an audience as Miss Powers di Unfortunately, the breed is now al most extinct. Fortunately it survive in Miss Powers.

There are actresses whose own un certainty is contagious. They kee audiences so busy worrying abou them that they leave spectators n time in which to surrender to th play. Miss Powers was different; al most grandly so. She knew wha she was doing at every moment dur ing the performance. What is mor she proceeded to do it. She is so com manding an actress that she cause even the stagestruck to forget the were hearing opera and remembe only that they were in the theatre.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

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De Balzac

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WHERE his contemporarie quailed
Before the human riddle,
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A sash around his middle,

Plunged into a sea of woes,
Getting wet all over.
Weltering in humanity
Balzac was in clover.

Balzac as a lover shook
Parisian chandeliers
With his Gargantuan laughter
And his Brobdingnagian tears,

And echoes of his mighty grief
And roars of his harsh laughter
Blew down literary doors
For all who follow after.

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China's Troubled Earth Dragons

WIND ACROSS THE WORLD. By Dorothy Graham. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1947. 278 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by ANN F. WOLFE

IN 1896 twelve-year-old Kit Fenton left the United States with her family and settled in that "center of colliding civilizations" called Shanghai. Her father, an engineer, was to build the first railroad up the Yangtse Valley.

Kit alone understood the years of delay that held up the project. She understood because she loved her father and loved China, and learned how to weigh her father's justice and his Western urge to progress against the traditionalism of an ancient Oriental culture. She sympathized with both sides of the case when the Viceroy said to her father: "We possess all things within the four seas. We have no need of odd, ingenious inventions. . . . If the barbarians dig, they will trouble the earth dragons and desecrate the bones of the ancestors."

Spiritually the young American girl belonged to the Chinese rather than to the sophisticates of the International Settlement. From a Chinese viewpoint she shows us how the "wind across the world"—the wind of liberalism—uprooted old values and old weaknesses in China and cleared some of the ground for national unity and strength.

In "Wind Across the World" the

story of Kit's family, of her romance and her husband's death, of her search for ultimate happiness keeps pace with the revolutionary decades that culminate in the rise of Chiang Kai-shek. The First World War, the fall of the Manchus, the students' uprising, the Russo-Japanese war, the upsurge of Japan's "cut-rate imperialism," the Soviet revolution, all leave their mark on modern China—most often through fire and bloodshed. No man's life there is untouched by China's changing destiny, whether exploited coolie or venal official, missionary's wife, or Standard Oil executive.

No American novelist of the East-West conflict has a surer sense of China's destiny than Miss Graham.

In this book, as in her others, Miss Graham's characterization is sensitive and humane. We identify her, for her love and knowledge of China, with Kit. However, there seems to be no excuse, artistic or sociological, for the Fenton trend toward inbreeding. As for pathetic Major Lightly, he constitutes sheer cruelty to characters. In creating such a travesty, the author does violence to the mood of compassion that keynotes most of her writing.

As a stylist Miss Graham excels in the delicate touch, the balanced fusion of artifice and realism, that suits both "the swift violence that was to cut away corruption" and the peopled landscape of "flat fertile ricelands, the fringe of bamboos, the canals dark with junks." In its own restrained and tolerant way, "Wind Across the World" is a lesson in brotherhood.

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Operations of the Navy—No. 3

BATTLE REPORT. Pacific Wars: Middle Phase. By Captain Walter Karig, USNR and Commander Eric Purdon, USNR. New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc. 1947. 418 pp. $5.

Reviewed by FLETCHER PRATT

THIS is the third volume in the series on the operations of the Navy, whose publication was originally arranged by President Roosevelt. It covers the Pacific war from the opening moves of the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942 down through Admiral Merrill's brilliant cruiser action off Empress Augusta Bay on November 1, 1943, and it is as different from its two predecessors as they are from each other. In fact, there has seldom been produced under a single direction a series of books so inconsistent in style, treatment, and even the type of material included.

The conditions under which the series has been brought out are largely responsible for this. When the first volume was produced the war was still hotly with us but victory was swinging to the American banners; in style and approach the book reflected the national relief over the end of the dark days, the national energy and determination to carry the thing through. The second volume was written while the war was still on, but it was published after the surrender of Japan. It described the anti-submarine operations, about which the Navy was so extremely secretive until our own submarines had ceased operating, and dealt in windy generalities in a manner that showed that the writers were trying to conceal what had really happened. In the form in which it reached the public it should not have been brought out at all. This third volume, produced after the close of the conflict, with Japanese as well as American records available and the censorship off, exceeds both the others in accuracy, completeness, and candor; but lacks much of the drive of the first volume, and seems to have been written by men who had something else on their minds. There are cases where the same incident is described twice, there are cases where quite important incidents are never mentioned at all. There are outrageous misproportions, as when the furious three-day battle of Guadalcanal, as decisive as any event in the war, gets twenty-four pages and the adventures of two survivors in the water receive eighteen, while later on the Battle of Rennell Island is allowed only a single line.

Deduction must be made for these things, and allowance for the plan of the book, which is, as the title fairly states, a report on the battles of the Navy during the period considered. The strategy that led to these battles is only barely indicated and the results are only barely mentioned. Being a record from official sources by official hands, the names of all ships present are carefully included and so is the full name and official title of every man mentioned. There is no attempt to pass judgment or to seek out the reason why a thing happened, even where some analysis seems called for, and almost any analysis would be interesting, as with the defeat off Savo Island and the victory off Vella Lavella. It is all straight action narrative, a record of events with an appendix listing every individual casualty.

Within these limits, and with these deductions, it is a service to history and a very good book, which will not be outmoded by the more elaborate treatment of the same subject forthcoming from Dr. Morison. The statements are always clear and precise and their accuracy is guaranteed. The period covered is the decisive phase of the Pacific war, including Coral Sea, Midway, Guadalcanal, the cruiser and destroyer battles up the Slot of the Solomons, and all the action in the Aleutians. When the book opens the Japanese are still on the offensive and no one could say how far they might not go. When it closes both Solomons and Aleutians are ours and the offensive has passed into American hands without qualification. In the intervening space the Army Air Force had done something, the Marines on the beachheads and the submarines in the western Pacific had done a great deal—but no one who reads this record can doubt that the fundamental reason for the change which took place was that the Japanese were well beaten in battle by the United States Navy. True, we had some defeats as at Savo Island, and many disappointments, but the general effect of the battles described in this book was to leave the enemy unwilling to undertake more battles, and this is the first connected account of how that result was brought about.

Fletcher Pratt wrote "Short History of the Army and Navy" and "Stormbeaten Ships" and collaborated on "My Life to the Destroyers."

Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

FOOD IN FAMILIAR QUOTATIONS

Jean Ayer, of Essex, Conn., submits sixteen familiar quotations in which the names of foods have been omitted. Can you fill in the blanks and thus find materials (though not in proper order) for a very hearty meal? Allowing six points for each correct answer, a score of fifty-four is par, sixty-six is very good, and seventy-eight or better is excellent. Answers on page 33.

1. Beautiful ....., so rich and green, waiting in a hot tureen!
2. I am a great eater of ....., and I believe that does harm to my wit.
3. Little ....., who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee?
4. I say it's ....., and I say the hell with it.
5. Four other ..... followed him, and yet another four.
6. Where the pools are bright and deep, where the gray ..... lies asleep.
7. What! all my pretty ..... and their dam at one fell swoop?
8. And they drank their health and gave them a feast of ..... made of beautiful yeast.
9. Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—of .....—and kings.
10. Sick for home, she stood in tears amid the alien .....
11. Stolen waters are sweet, and ..... eaten in secret is pleasant.
12. They fought the dogs and killed the cats, and ate the ..... out of the vats.
13. She looketh as ..... would not melt in her mouth.
14. If all the world were ..... and all the sea were ink.
15. 'Tis the part of a wise man to keep himself today for tomorrow, and not venture all his ..... in one basket.
16. Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more ..... and ale?

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DOWN WITH WYLIE! UP WITH MOM!

(*Continued from page 8*)

But to blame Mom alone for the emotional immaturity of her children is nonsense. Emotional immaturity derives mainly from the basic sexual instability of the human race. When Dr. Ralph Banay of Columbia states that the emotional development of the American woman lags behind her social and economic progress, that her total nature is pre-adolescent, that her sexual ideas belong to the Stone Age, he is only one-half correct. All-inclusive generalizations are unsound, but accepting Dr. Banay's as stated, his strictures concerning American women are equally true of American men. Condemnation of one-half of the human race will get us nowhere. The entire race must be blamed for our current confusion. Only as a whole can that race correct its evils.

Spiritually man is adrift on the dark waters his ingenuity has sorely troubled. Intellectually the race has some justification for sporting a dinner jacket. But, bombs permitting, that race has a long, hard road to travel before it will have the right to wear the white tie and tails of emotional maturity. The blatancy of Mom's critics serves to remind us that the only members of that race who ever meet people who are fully matured emotionally are undertakers.

At Hiroshima this race was caught with its cosmical constants down. It may be indicative that the outcry against Momism became more vociferous after that explosion that heralded the second Fall of Man. That Fall produced not one but many Adams. They are scurrying around to find themselves fig leaves, for their desecrated Eden now encompasses the earth.

Is the ancient myth about to become reality?

WE know a woman scientist helped to pin down and split the atom. We know that behind the peaceful façade of every major power preparations for an atomic war are being feverishly considered. When that war comes, bringing indiscriminate and universal carnage; when man's cities are rubble; when his soil is robbed of its productivity and fertilized with disease; when its survivors are stripped of their veneer of culture and again become hungry animals scrabbling for food, will anyone then ask if these millions of men, women, and children died as the courageous die? Nobody will know, for none lived who saw them perish. Did they die as cowards die? Nobody will care, for neither courage nor cowardice could save them.

When again the voice of retribution is heard at evening in the devastated Eden, will man's sense of guilt again be too great for him to bear? Where is the scapegoat? And some scribes will search for it. From atavistic impulse, from long habit, he will search for that scapegoat, not in Abraham's tent, but in the tents of the women. And there he will find that woman scientist.

Will that Adamic scribe again absolve himself of guilt before his Creator? Will he again plead:

"The woman Thou gavest me, she plucked the forbidden fruit from the tree of cosmic knowledge. Mom is to blame!"

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 206

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 206 will be found in the next issue.

KRM ULHAMPM PBUONAKLCM

BU DRMC KRMNAF

NLKUKABHU HMAONAPQCGM.

EMNCQASN SQ XBCGB—

CNKMTNNZU

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 205

The fiends laugh, they say, when one thief robs another.

SIR WALTER SCOTT
Ivanhoe.

FRANK HARRIS
A BIOGRAPHY

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Autobiographical Masquerade

THERE WAS A TIME. By Taylor Caldwell. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1947. 471 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

MISS Caldwell's tenth novel is, at last, autobiography, under an unusual if thin disguise. I do not remember any other autobiographical novel in which the writer presents himself (or herself) inside a fictitious personality of the opposite sex. It is an ambitious device, adding as it does the burden of objectivity to that of self-exploration: two of the most incompatible tasks in writing. And of course it doesn't really work out that way, chiefly because Miss Caldwell never projects herself into a masculine personality. It was an impossible fiction for her to maintain, just as Thomas Wolfe found another similar (although less demanding) transformation impossible, when he attempted to leave his familiar self, Eugene Gant, to try to inhabit another figure called George Webber. Webber turned into Gant soon enough. And so also do we perceive this fictitious Frank Clair, poetic, creative, bitter, fearful, groping, shedding his never-convincing pretensions of masculinity and speaking more and more clearly with the voice and personality of his feminine creator.

There can be no question of the autobiographical nature of this book. Frank Clair's childhood in an English industrial town, his family's migration to America, his schooling in Buffalo, New York, his growing passion to become a writer, parallel quite exactly the life of Miss Caldwell; and the thing is clinched by her description of Clair's first novel, a study of the bankers and munitions makers very like her own first book, "Dynasty of Death." It is then that Clair comes to New York to visit his publishers, "Thomas Ingham's Sons," and to meet the inspired editor there with the "thin, patrician face," the "pale blue eyes," whom Miss Caldwell calls "Cornell Hawkins." Wolfe called him "Foxhall Edwards," and you will, I think, find a better and a more thorough portrait of him in "You Can't Go Home Again." But this one will suffice. Miss Caldwell's picture of Hawkins is at once reverential and unfailingly honest. She has him say something about Clair's writing which makes the best possible judgment upon her own work. Hawkins says to Clair, "Yes, I think you are a fine story-teller. Your characters live and have vitality. After all, that is the most important thing in a novel. I don't think the subject-matter is so important. . . ."

I have read two others of Miss Caldwell's books, and they are well described above. Their subject matter often seemed unimportant, often sensational and meretricious; but the characters in them lived and had vitality, and there was a certain haunting fascination about them that lent an irresistible credibility to their fates. Here, too, so much of the actual data of Frank Clair's life is patently unimportant and sometimes—as in the case of some of his sentimental excursions into what he thought was worldly experience—utter blithering nonsense. But the essential, blazing vitality of which Hawkins spoke is there. Frank Clair, despite his pseudo-maleness, despite his nauseating jags of self-pity and narcissism, lives and takes on stature. Once we are admitted to the innards of his conscious life and perceive the vast and tortuous geography of his mental life, we forget his sex (as does Miss Caldwell) and believe in the growing, tortured, creative spirit that goes by his name. I liked this book better than the others I have read. It seems a profounder and more realistic work than those, and suggests, in the writer herself, a searching, restless development. The next books of a writer of whom that may be said are always important.

Monahans and McCloskeys

THERE'S A SPOT IN MY HEART. By Frank Leslie. Illustrated by Frederick E. Banbery. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1947. 240 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by ANN F. WOLFE

THE Monahans were untouchables, at least to the Van Woorts. "A whole generation of Liths, Letts, and Latts had to grow up and push us Irish up the social scale before we got in at all," explains Esmaux Loyola Van Woort. "Today we call our children Sean and Deirdre and let the Slavs play football for us."

Esmaux Loyola Van Woort, whose "very name was an affront to Irish heroes, living and hanged," is the chronicler of his Edwardian childhood in the brownstone West Seventies. The spot in Esmaux's heart is for Grandfather Monahan, whose Irish gallantry once took him half way around the world to hear Patti sing. Grandfather read nothing but Greek. His cultured and witty talk flowed *sub specie aeternitatis;* a few "clarets" oiled the springs of his patrician mind.

Undismayed by earth's social distinctions and secure in the society of the saints, Grandmother Monahan feuded with McCloskey the cook, taking time out on Sundays to go to six o'clock Mass with her. To Uncle George life was a syllogism built of two major premises. He took it head on, fortified by dialectics and profanity.

Mother, whose hold on reality was as tenuous as her relationship with the Van Woorts, was perpetually flurried and disoriented. To her household gravitated minor originals whose being and seeming were predicated on the bounty of the Monahan kitchen.

"There's a Spot in My Heart" is designated as a "nostalgic novel," unaccountably, for it has no plot. It is made up of the events and personalities of Esmaux's world — Uncle George's failure as a boxing coach, Grandfather's unheroic military career, the occupational maladjustments of McCloskey's nephew, the provocative conversational exchanges between Grandfather and Uncle George. It was a world that taught him irreverence without disrespect, skepticism without cynicism, disenchantment without bitterness. It taught him that the easy may be the unsporting—a valuable lesson in establishing "The Absolutes behind the Ultimates."

Mr. Leslie is one of the most civilized humorists this reviewer has laughed at in years. Even when he puts Grandfather up to being hard on his Jesuit mentors, he knows they enjoy a laugh with their wittier alumni. Grandfather is a medievalist. His wit is largely humanistic, for his mind is never too far from the thought of "a simple French peasant driving down a rural lane with the gift of an oxcart-load of stones for the building of Chartres."

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A STUDY OF HISTORY

(*Continued from page 12*)

the third is the artistic re-creation of the facts in the form of 'fiction.'" He asserts that the first is the technique of history, the second that of science, while the third represents the technique of the drama and the novel. Soon he begins to tear down these distinctions between the techniques of history, anthropology, and fiction which he himself had first advanced. He fails, however, to analyze the actual nature of "facts" and "laws." Instead we are only told that the novel and drama contained good history, while history on its part was using fiction to select, arrange, and present its facts. Moreover, not only anthroopology but also history is now supposed "to make a beginning with the formulation of laws."

Such statements are not apt to create a firm philosophical foundation for the author's ambitious project nor do they enable the reader to grasp its full intentions. All through his work Toynbee maintains that he is merely applying the inductive method. To him facts are ready-made objective elements which through an imaginative interpretation can be woven into wider patterns. By a comparative study of these structures laws can be discovered. However, the role of the imagination is both greater and smaller than Toynbee assumes. History is the re-enactment of the past in the mind of the historian, and even "facts" exist only there. But in contrast to poetry they call for critical verification. Even less can imagination by itself produce an objective selection and arrangement of facts. To assert the contrary would necessitate the identification of the historical novel with critical historical writing as well as of mythology with universal history. In this respect Toynbee tends to neglect not only the modern philosophical exploration of the problems of historical research but even the critical demands which Thucydides first laid down.

It is Herodotus's rather than Thucydides's spirit which hovers over Toynbee's book. It displays the same truly catholic scope, the same boundless curiosity for the phenomenal world and the delight in its literary presentation, while methodological problems receive scant attention. But the parallel should not be overdone. One could say also that his work renewed the great tradition of the Christian philosophy of history which dominated Western thought from Augustine to Bossuet, if this view of history had not rested upon the belief that divine rather than human actions constituted the only objects worthy of speculation. Toynbee remains a humanist, and though he knows of higher hopes, the achievements of man constitute the proper subjects of research.

By focussing attention upon the methodology and philosophy of Toynbee's study the full scope of his intellectual achievement is not adequately presented. The work is woven like a rich carpet with impressive patterns in deep, if dark, colors. It breaks away in earnest from the historiography which centers around a single nation or a single civilization, and with its wealth of information and literary illustration opens entirely new vistas of history. It is history, philosophically interpreted, rather than a philosophy of history, written by a devout visionary possessed by great poetic gifts. Attempts have already been made to turn his book into a shibboleth in the ideological war that is raging. But the work of this truly gentle mind is not belligerent. It can be said with confidence that it succeeds in looking far over the world of universal history, though it is often satisfied with mere esthetic contemplation at the expense of sharp philosophical and historical analysis.

Hajo Holborn, professor of international history at Yale, was OSS chief of military government and civilian affairs research during the war.

Australian Fleece

ON THE WOOL TRACK. By C. E. W. Bean. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1947. 210 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

IT IS about time that we are getting published in this country more books on Australia. This one is excellent of its kind. It is an informal but most instructive account of the vast wool industry in the "outside" of Australia, which is really the inside of the vast heart of the country, where there is very little rain, and where the finest wool grows. Furthermore, the very intelligent author has made it a study of Australian geography in relation to the habits of the people. This will be valuable for commentators and historians. Also, being descriptive and well written, it is very good reading apart from its informational value.

Witchcraft in England

by

CHRISTINA HOLE

In the centuries that the witch-belief flourished in England its influence was enormous. Within the limits of an easily readable book, Miss Hole has shown how varied were the roots from which this strange plant sprang, and how diverse were the attractions of magic which drew together philosopher and criminal, great lord and peasant in one vast ill-assorted company.

Mervyn Peake in his many illustrations in monochrome and line, recaptures the macabre intensity of this belief, the fantastic human types who were its devotees and the horror and fascination it exercised through the by-ways of English history.

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HEARING THINGS

MUSIC IN PRINCETON

WHILE the musical life of the metropolis was reaching the end of the fashionable season, shortly to give way to the lighter fare of the summer, several of us journeyed down to Princeton to attend the musical session of the conference arranged by the university to celebrate its bicentennial. A distinguished gathering of scholars and musicians from here and abroad promised an enlightening and profitable meeting, and we were not disappointed. The musical lectures tied in well with the deliberations of the archeologists, and started off with a report on the state of studies in Byzantine liturgy and music by Professor Egon Wellesz of Oxford University, one of the leading experts in the field, followed by two papers dealing with various aspects of music in the Renaissance by Otto Kinkeldey, of Harvard University, and Alfred Einstein, of Smith College. The program, well arranged by Princeton's Oliver Strunk, one of our keenest and most resourceful musicologists, centered around the Renaissance, quite appropriately in view of the impending publication by the Princeton University Press of Dr. Einstein's monumental work on the history of the Italian madrigal.

Dr. Kinkeldey dwelt on the difficult question of music's participation in the movement of the Renaissance. The lecture reminded us how recent are scholarly investigations in the field of music. Less than a hundred years ago the great cultural historians of the Renaissance, Michelet, Burckhardt, and Symonds, knew next to nothing about the musical wealth of their chosen field of investigation. While it is true that the first modern history of music, that of Ambros (1682-78), was not yet accessible to these eminent and indefatigable scholars, there were other, primary sources at their disposal that could have enlightened them. Precisely because they were so indefatigable it is surprising that they did not investigate music as thoroughly as they did art and literature, for musical scenes and subjects stared at them from a multitude of paintings, bas-reliefs, and illuminated manuscripts which they discuss in great detail. However, even in our day, many an historian is led astray by the fact that music, more than any other art, dates rapidly, and as the fashions change it falls into oblivion. As Dr. Kinkeldey demonstrated with his customary eloquence, John Dunstable (d. 1453) was hailed by the men of the Renaissance as the "inventor" of music. The notion of invention springs from a twin phenomenon in the spirit of the Renaissance. One is the humanistic pride which announces with ever-increasing confidence that music is its own creation, the other the era's eagerness to supplant the old, and its almost childlike pleasure in reckoning time from every new date. A fast tempo of life goes together with frequent changes, with quick forgetting. The Palestrinian era knew little about the great fifteenth-century composers, to whom in turn the masters of the fourteenth century were mere names.

Dr. Einstein, whose store of information is apparently inexhaustible, held forth on an interesting study of expression and symbol in the Italian madrigal. To modern audiences Renaissance chanson and madrigal are little known; indeed, the same persons who enjoy and understand the great paintings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries refuse to believe that these great art works had their counterparts in music. These chansons and madrigals represent an intimate art, composed with infinite skill and sensitiveness. The madrigal composers wanted to represent every shade of sentiment, from frivolous trifles to stark tragedy. Their constant and instinctive desire to make words come to life gave their music delicate shades that no other period could ever match.

To the madrigalist everything is picture, and at the same time symbol,

and in order to attain his ends, to conjure up life, the composer—as Dr. Einstein convincingly demonstrated—composes pictorially. Every comparison is illustrated, every word sounds and radiates, every gesture speaks and vibrates with life's desires and passions. But words alone cannot describe this art, and the Princetonians under the expert leadership of Randall Thompson, one of our foremost composers, one especially at home in choral music, awakened the mute scores by treating the appreciative audience to a musical feast. There was no 120-piece orchestra on the stage, only a vocal ensemble of nine young men and women, but what color and what excitement emanated from this miniature chorus! Palestrina's beautiful if somewhat cautious madrigal which opened the concert was followed by two infinitely subjective part songs by Luca Marenzio, whom even Shakespearian England considered the king of madrigalists. How far can eloquence and pictorial expressivenes go in music? Marenzio sets these verses:

I know that I am dying,
Yet fear no other evil
Than, dead, to be deprived
Of what would be my sweetest consolation:
That from thy shining eyes
My own should ever draw forth tears in streams.

The words step out from the melodies clothed with nuances and inflections that words alone could not convey. Every light and shadow, every tremor and every cry is apprehended and communicated on the wings of sensuous music reveling in the beauty of human song. Two other Italian and one Flemish madrigalist furnished other works of different hues but always with that unfailing splendor of Renaissance choral sound.

THEN we heard music of the first great master of the High Renaissance, a musical genius of the first rank, who succeeded in uniting the architectural-constructive logic of his Flemish home with the pure radiation of the South, formless inspiration with form-building nobility. Josquin Desprez was a musical humanist: his music springs from the text, from the poet's words and ideas. But because he is a not altogether faithful interpreter, because he has requirements of his own, there arises between the music and the ideas expressed by the text a certain secret fluctuating balance that captivates everyone. Luther praised Josquin above all other musicians, and various writers likened him to Virgil and Michelangelo. The chanson, of which he was one of the masters, is somewhat different from the madri-

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gal; it is at once idyllic and discursive, it is a playful art yet it is deadly earnest, an alloy of courtly art and the spell of nature. But Josquin's palette has many colors, and in the plaintive strains of his famous composition in memory of his departed master Ockeghem an altogether different person is before us.

Three madrigals by Monteverdi carried us to the confines of the species. Of all the composers presented in the evening, Monteverdi is perhaps the best known to the public at large, although to be sure for different reasons. But the madrigalist is not the dramatist, or at least not always; and it was no accident that the wonderful expressive powers we admire so much in Monteverdi's operas he acquired as a composer of madrigals. His mastery —always astounding—was vividly illustrated by his setting of a pastoral text with music of the utmost seriousness. A witty, amusing, and extremely skilfully composed little madrigal comedy by that prince of sixteenth-century musicians Orlando di Lasso concluded an engrossing evening of music, presented with professional skill, a love for music making, and real understanding of this exacting art.

These events were all prepared and are, of course, not part of the everyday routine of music at Princeton. In the afternoon, however, I dropped in on one of the intramural musical activities not connected with the bicentennial celebrations: a student concert. Three young men, composition students of Randall Thompson, presented their works, two string quartets and a piano quintet, all done in the regular course of their studies. The string quartet is a type of composition that even the great masters —at least those after Haydn—approach with the utmost precaution and humility. Brahms, an avowed master of chamber music, destroyed a number of his earlier quartets before feeling that he was justified in publishing one. Nowhere else is musicianship so exposed, nowhere else is the composer so naked before the eyes of the critic. It bespeaks the competence and devotion of master and students that they chose this vehicle for study and creative work. The young composers showed real feeling for chamber music, a fine sense of part writing, and an understanding of the possibilities of the medium. The Princeton Prize in Musical Composition was awarded to Henry Morgan, composer of the winning quartet.

Princeton University is famous for its excellence in art history and archeological studies. Judging from my experiences, this great institution will be equally prominent in the field of music. That a music department with such a small staff (Messrs. Strunk, Thompson, and Welch) can produce such results is remarkable indeed, but it must be adequately supported in order to give adequate scope to its capabilities. Music is still a stepchild in most of our academic institutions. Yet when called upon to join in a celebration to lend lustre and sweet sound to the festivities, the musicians and musical scholars rise to the occasion, and, although compared with the other departments they are mere beggars, they get spruced up with the aid of their academic budget of nickels and dimes, and no one can yield to them in nobility, scholarship, and artistry.

PAUL HENRY LANG.

Tobacco Harvest

(Connecticut Valley)

By Grace Hazard Conkling

NOW the tobacco velvet hangs in the barns.
They have opened the doors to let September through.
The weather-silvered walls are open too;
Alternate boards swung out so that the air
May sweeten heavy leaves soft-hanging there;
Barns that have gills like fish and breathe the sun
In warm andante rhythm. Their lines are drawn
Slender and long; they float on level fields
Like ships in convoy when the wind has gone.
And down the latticed sides and all between,
Crowding the open spaces with blue-green
Smouldering sea-colors, as though waves
Were caught and clustered, drooping heavily
The rich leaves ripen.

Look now before they go
Into their rusty bronze. Before the snow.
This is a moment meant for lingering.
People move more slowly half-aware
Of musky fragrance drifting everywhere.

Are You Traveling This Summer?

●

By navigation, ambulation, or cerebration, you don't want the local gáuchos to find you gauche. There's more to Cuba than libres (for *SRL* readers anyway), more to Tahiti than love songs, more to New Guinea than mud. You may not be ripping through Russia this season — though most everybody is—but there's Moscow in Idaho, Odessa in Texas, and everything in New York. You may already be a topographical wizard on Burma, Bolivia, and Bhutan, but can you find your way around Brooklyn?

Whether you're motoring, sailing, or flying—in fancy or fact—you'll want to know where you're going and know it well in advance. *SRL* is ready to help. Beginning with the issue of June 21, and appearing bi-weekly thereafter, "Booked for Travel" will be a feature of *The Saturday Review*. The department will combine authoritative reviews of current travel books with responsible data on the volumes' locales. Horace Sutton will brief you on transportation, accommodations, costs, and conditions.

If you can't wait until June 21 to start probing the globe, write to *SRL*'s new Travel Department for our free "Books Around the World" list, rounding up nearly 100 selected travel books issued by leading publishers from July '46 to July '47.

Travel Department

THE SATURDAY REVIEW

25 West 45th Street
New York 19, N. Y.

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Twice-Told Tales and Themes

COLLECTED POEMS. By Theodore Maynard. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1946. 222 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by SISTER M. MARGUERITE

THIS latest book of Mr. Maynard is a disappointment. From the somewhat foggy preface by Alfred Noyes, who claims that after all his rich and varied experiences in the United States Mr. Maynard is still homesick for England, down to the last selection, a sort of dogged chanting the virtues and vices of poets, one feels a futility and an emptiness.

True, there is a definite improvement in craftsmanship: the forced rhymes of *heroical* with *all*, or *magical* with *call* that appeared in an earlier volume are omitted. But the collection is redolent of twice-told tales, hackneyed themes, and dressed-up theories. His admired "Bread and Wine" has been unfortunately—though of course not consciously—lampooned in the more popular version: "You are the tops." But even had it not been, it is possible to take a simple phrase "were you wine," or "were you not wine" and ring the changes on it until the reader or hearer feels there is an artificial element in the comparison, regardless of the writer's evident sincerity.

With two exceptions, and with a slightly different sequence, the entire contents of "Man and Beast" are reprinted. Here, "Lip No Lies," clumsy though the title is, supplies the theme and contains a thought that is probably the *apologia* for every poet's productions:

I must write it as I can
Born of woman, not of man.

The poems from the section "Exile" no doubt give Mr. Noyes basis for his theory of homesickness. It is likely, though, that had the situation been reversed, and had the earlier experiences been laid in the United States, then the theme would have been: "Liverpool is lovely, but it's not California," instead of: "The Golden Gates are nice, but they're not in England." Perhaps, too, the nostalgic element is compounded of disillusionment and weariness which dominate such poems as "The Venture," "Mutability," and "Then and Now."

In fact, the progress of Mr. Maynard's emotional outlook can readily be traced from the romantic idealism of "Man and Beast," through the somewhat irritatingly insistent comparisons and brooding of "Exile," down to the reality-facing skepticism of "New Poems." It is particularly regrettable that the poem which gives the third section its title, "Not Even Death," should contain the fantastic conceit of a marriage between a jeweled head and a laureled brow, because this section also contains the best selections, poems that lift the book above mediocrity and are really representative of Mr. Maynard's talent.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 687)

WILLIAM A. WHITE:

*TO T. ROOSEVELT (President)**

Lord, . . . how we do need to make the courts serve our democracy! The only thing I would like . . . political power for would be to name some judge who would hand down an opinion declaring that courts had only judicial and not political powers.

* November 27, 1908. From "Selected Letters of William Allen White," edited by Walter Johnson, 1947.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
DEAD WRONG *Stewart Stirling* (Lippincott: $2.50)	Mysterious poisoning of Va. wife in swank N. Y. hotel explosively elucidated by house dick, who gets canned for bruising gilded toes.	Shrewd sleuthing, believable—although generally unpleasant-characters, good plotting, crisp chatter and swift action against veracious Virginia and Manhattan back-drops.	High-grade
SHADOW FOR A LADY *J. Lane Linklater* (Mill: $2.50)	Anonymous and uncooperative female client gets Calif. private detective into considerable trouble before his specialized knowledge snares triple murderer.	Murderous goings-on among denizens of town in orange-growing country provide plentiful action, much of it tough, and average detection.	Fair
FORGOTTEN MYSTERIES *R. Dewitt Miller* (Cloud: $2.50)	Sixteen short tales of "mysteries"—not murders in this case, but hants, poltergeists, lost continents, etc., etc.	Author's delving into field of odd happenstances results in Ripleyan volume that may be sampled, or devoured, with considerable pleasure and instruction.	Good bedside book
NINE MORE LIVES *Michael Morgan* (Random House: $2.50)	Movie stunt-man framed for slaying of luscious blonde. Escaping from cops he takes over solving of case with spectacular results.	Sneerers at deeds of indestructible sleuths here may see man paid to know how to be indestructible doing stuff—and how!	Cyclonic!
THE SHADOW OF GUILT *Robert Bloomfield* (Crime Club: $2.)	War veteran impetuously weds girl just acquitted of murdering rich aunt. Subsequent events make him wonder—but he carries on.	Opening of yarn bit hard to swallow but development and solution are ably handled, and characters are both odd and interesting.	Entertaining
THE HONEST DEALER *Frank Gruber* (Rinehart: $2.)	Corpse they discover in Death Valley leads Johnny Fletcher and Sam Cragg to Las Vegas, temporary affluence, more corpses, and customary financial extinction.	Boys don't have much chance to do their book-selling routine but engage in some exciting gambling feats and violent conniving.	Standard toughie
FIRE IN THE SNOW *Hammond Innes* (Harpers: $2.50)	Dolomite ski lodge scene of murders, intrigue, and post-war search for Nazi treasure. English movie-writer chief "investigator."	Group of evil and enigmatical characters act out eventful and thrillful drama against snowy backgrounds—with holocaust at finish.	First-rate!
ELECTION BY MURDER *Alfred Eichler* (Lantern Press: $2.)	Power-greedy newspaper-chain owner strangely slain in closely guarded Calif. ranch-house. Radio-producer Ames spots clever killer.	Murder-method is new and story pops with melodramatic action, which is retarded by "timely" infusions of post-war politics.	Unimportant

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Songs in a Rarefied Atmosphere

HINGS VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE. By Martha Bacon. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc. 1947. 56 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by SARA HENDERSON HAY

SEVERAL influences are apparent in the work of Martha Bacon, notably Elinor Wylie, certain of he Elizabethans, and the Pre-Raphelite Brotherhood. She likes the exuisite, the finely-drawn, the rich rappings of legend, the classic forıality of the courtly and disciplined hrase, the mysticism and the metahysical imagery. There is nothing rong in being influenced, if, as the oet grows, he outgrows his tendency o speak, however well, an adopted anguage. Miss Bacon's poetic gift is leepening and maturing, and in the est of the poems in her new collecion, "Things Visible and Invisible," he words and the music are her own. Ier poetry is subjective, disciplined; he emotion tempered and restrained. or all its clarity of phrase it is not imple poetry, but it is not, with the xception of a long poem, "Burd Helen in the Dark Tower," obscure ı wilfully strange and difficult. Her ondness for classical, literary, and ıythical allusion does, however, give nuch of her work a rarefied atmosphere. Carried to an extreme, as I elieve this tendency is in the poem 'Burd Helen," the mysticism and the symbology lose their force and baffle he reader who is unable to interpret heir significance. Though I admired the brilliance and the luxuriance of this poem with its mass of metaphor and imagery, its Kubla Khan dream were lost to me even after several readings and a fair acquaintance with the Childe Roland story—and I do not think the fault was wholly mine.

On the other hand, a poem like "Touch All" is explicit without being obvious, carefully and brilliantly phrased, and it fuses the objective with the subjective with clarity and beauty. It is good counsel for the

poet, it is good counsel for all. The heart, says Miss Bacon, in this philosophical credo, need fear no experience; it can by its own virtue turn indignity to dignity and without infection meet and overcome any evil the world can bring to bear.

Then touch, touch without fear
Stars burning, excellent earth,
All that has being or birth.
For so and only so
Shall the heart live and know
Itself the armor proof,
The fierce and valiant roof
Against all storms that burst,
The little ill, the worst.
Never deny the shock.
The heart is very rock
And touching all is made
Innocent, unafraid,
The naked virtue springing
Sudden and white and singing
From barbarous seas accurst,
The last, the radiant first. . . .

The echoes are still there, but the poet's own voice rings above them with ardor and sincerity. The title poem, though skilfully and movingly done, is the classic defiance of death to take the loved one—

And if death mocks credulity and breaks you,
Makes vile intrusion of the shrine and takes you,
Then he must change his dire nature smarting
Beneath your splendor to make bright your parting.
And if I should not hear your voice again
Nor share a joy with you nor plead with pain
To spare you utterly or stop my breath,
Still you shall make an arrant fool of death. . . .

Miss Bacon is, I feel, still too much under the influence of a tradition and an idiom which she understandably admires, but her own gifts are so considerable and her poetic sincerity so evident that I cannot think it will take her long to shake herself free from any entangling alliances and to take her place as one of our most able and distinguished younger poets.

Sara Henderson Hay's most recent books of poetry are "This, My Letter" and "Field of Honor."

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Soup. Carroll: "Alice in Wonderland." 2. Beef. "Twelfth Night." 3. Lamb. Blake: "The Lamb." 4. Spinach. E. B. White: *The New Yorker.* 5. Oysters. Carroll: "Through the Looking Glass." 6. Trout. Hogg: "A Boy's Song." 7. Chickens. "Macbeth." 8. Dumplings. Lear: "The Jumblies." 9. Cabbages. Carroll: "Through the Looking Glass." 10. Corn. Keats: "Ode to a Nightingale." 11. Bread. Proverbs IX. 12. Cheeses. Browning: "The Pied Piper." 13. Butter. Heywood: "Proverbes." 14. Apple pie. "Mother Goose." 15. Eggs. Cervantes: "Don Quixote." 16. Cakes. "Twelfth Night."

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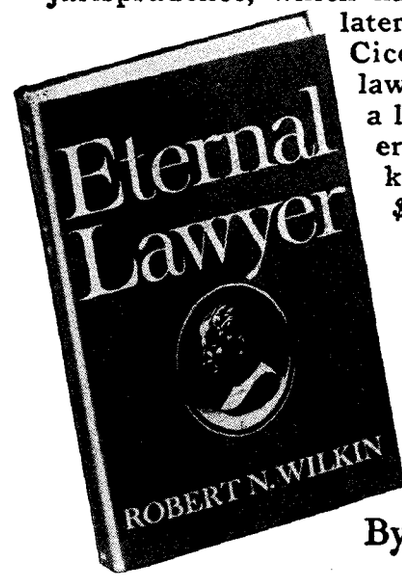

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The New Recordings

POET, TITLE, ETC.	*Intelligibility*	*Recording Technique*	PERSONALITY, EFFECTIVENESS
T. S. ELIOT reads the HOLLOW MEN, GERONTIUS. (1933) SS 5052,53 (1)	A–	Overloaded, somewhat distorted and harsh. Surfaces B.	One of the most effective records ever made in spite of poor technical quality. Gives the creeps!
W. H. AUDEN reads TRAVELLER; SONNETS 17, 21, 27; SONG; SPRING IN WARTIME. P-1052,53 (1)	B+	A smooth voice, records easily. This series ("P") sounds well on small machine, cut-off 5 to 6,000.	Rather blasê, unexciting, though good reading. Slight lisp. British accent, of course.
ROBINSON JEFFERS reads from SELECTED POEMS. P-1046,47; 1048,49; 1050, 51 (3) *(see catalogue)*	B	Reading is smooth, but sibilants are seriously missing (mike setup plus his particular voice quality?).	Reading is fast, slurred; many small words are lost. Tone somewhat monotonous.
OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY reads from WILD APPLES, ELBOW ROOM. P-1040, 41; 1042, 43 (2)	B+	The Gogarty sibilants are fair. He reads close to mike—some peaks.	Fine, singing Irish reading, in the great tradition. Slight brogue. This is poetry made to be read.
MURIEL RUKEYSER reads from BEAST IN VIEW (1944) P-1092,93; 1094,95 (2)	C+	She "peaks" badly, dies away to nothing. Sibilants inaudible. A poor microphone voice.	Very poor delivery; words slurred, ends of phrases taper off, small words lost. Somewhat sing-song.
TENNESSEE WILLIAMS reads from THE SUMMER BELVIDERE. P-1120, 21; 1122, 23 (2)	B+	This has surfaces superior to all above (rates A–); helps intelligibility. Sibilants are seriously lacking.	Southern accent may seem affected; but good reading nevertheless. Could be slower. Lisp effect is bad.
DAVID McCORD reads from THE CROWS; BAY WINDOW BALLADS; AND WHAT'S MORE. P-1006, 07; 1008, 09; 1010, 11 (3)	A	McCord's voice is big, scratchy, excellent for mike. Best sibilants in this series.	Friendly, humorous light verse; a friendly voice. Makes the most of many alliterative puns, etc. Fine tonal variety.
JOHN HOLMES reads from ADDRESS TO THE LIVING; MAP OF MY COUNTRY. P-1000, 01; 1002, 03; 1004, 05. (3)	A–	Good baritone quality, well reproduced.	Reading is nasal, not open; but good diction helps. Tone gets bit monotonous.

THE HARVARD POETRY RECORDINGS

FOR fifteen years Professor Frederick C. Packard, Jr., of Harvard, has recorded notable poets, actors, and teachers who come to Harvard. His Vocarium discs are for sale, on order. Write Harvard Film Service, 4 Lawrence Hall, Cambridge 38, Mass., for complete catalogue, or to *SRL*.

The above survey of poets reading their own works is an experiment on a new line of inquiry, and comment will be much appreciated. I have omitted judgment on the poetry itself. Instead, I have judged the total recorded effectiveness, which depends on three major factors: first the voice and personality of the reader, then the special demands of the microphone, and, finally, the complexities of the record-making process itself. The new arrangement used above, including over-all intelligibility as a major criterion, is my present contribution. If interest warrants, more Harvard records will be covered and other recorded collections will be tapped.

None of the Harvard records are up to top post-war standards of high-fidelity voice recording. With a cut-off of about 6,000 cycles, the vital sibilant sounds are touch-and-go; those voices with the sharpest edge and strongest hissing sounds come over best; others simply lithp. But in spite of limitations the collection is a remarkable one and all in all extraordinarily effective. As for poets reading their own works—alas it is notable that not a single poet is as effective as any of several skilled readers-of-others'-works in the Harvard collection! I draw no conclusions.

EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.

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the Phoenix Nest

SALE, RAIN OR SHINE

HERE come the curious and the backward-turned
To this tiered house, episcopal with glass,
This high, sad, Gothic edifice,
Like a white dodo on Peconic Bay—
They are the Looters in their summer suits,
The bead-eyed cormorants of lost estates,
Who love to rummage into fusty rooms,
To gloat upon each lamp and ottoman,
And on the photographs she husked,
Shrugged off (like pupa case),
To cross the mossgreen rug whereon she walked.
She and her brother never once discerned
That they were "lost" or "sad"; they lived
On the most tenuous foothold of their Dream:
A world of wide appointments swiftly kept.
Amber is so transparent and unflawed
They never guessed it fixed them in its glaze,
Yet trapped they were: the "bad girl" and the boy.
The latter's room is crammed with tennis cups,
School pennants, dumb-bell sets and gloves;
He must have read, for here's a book or two:
Anita Loos, "Cheiro" and histories of Yale;
This house, with its strange clutter of the past,
Gives the effect of rout, of scurrying,
As of that fatal night-flight to Varennes,—
With here a letter, there a tossed-off shoe,
Unemptied cartons, rifled cabinets,—
The Flight itself smirches the Fugitive,
Reveals him, always, as a shoddy cheat,
A rich impostor, or a frightened king.
In 1929 the Change began,
The Going-Southward, the strict settlement.
. . . Nicks and faint imprints, smudges, marks in dust
Bemuse the mind. . . . The maze of bygone life,
(Historied, dead) through which the stranger moves,
Clings to his thought. He shuts the door,
Descends the steps that lead through blackened firs
To tennis courts (now overgrown with dock);
Here is the garden, speared by sea-lyme and broom,
A-welter with wood-melic and fescue;
Each May the blue flags out of habit bloom
Though there is none to care; each June the phlox,
Choked in the rank grass, whitens the evening air.

HOWARD GRIFFIN.

* * *

I thank Marion N. Chandler of Winchester, Mass., for:

> Kenneth Porter's reference to an early mention of the atomic bomb sent me hunting through my well-worn copy of Robert Browning's poetry for a dimly remembered passage that might well be so interpreted. I found it in "Ferishtah's Fancies":
>
> To know of, think about—
> Is all man's sum of faculty effects
> When exercised on earth's least atom, Son!
> What was, what is, what may such atom be?
> No answer! Still, what seems it to man's sense?
> An atom with some certain properties
> Known about, thought of as occasion needs,
> Man's—but occasions of the universe?
> Unthinkable, unknowable to man.
> Yet, since to think and know fire through and through
> Exceeds man, is the warmth of fire unknown,
> Its uses—are they so unthinkable?
> Pass from such obvious power to powers unseen,
> Undreamed of save in their sure consequence.
>
> Robert Browning seems to have been unduly neglected lately. There is so much in him that is modern, and thoughtful, so much verve, so much good red meat, he's well worth digging into. I wonder how many of your readers are familiar with his thoroughly contemporary "Why I Am a Liberal":
>
> "Why?" Because all I haply can and do,
> All that I am now, all I hope to be,—
> Whence comes it save from fortune setting free
> Body and soul the purpose to pursue,
> God traced for both? If fetters, not a few,
> Of prejudice, convention, fall from me,
> These shall I bid men—each in his degree
> Also God-guided—, bear and gayly, too?
> But little do or can the best of us:
> That little is achieved through Liberty.
> Who then dares hold, emancipated thus,
> His fellow shall continue bound? Not I,
> Who live, love, labor freely, nor discuss
> A brother's right to freedom. That is "Why."

* * *

Edna St. John Crockett and her group, the Word Weavers, originated a National Ballad Contest, memorializing Stephen Vincent Benét. On Mrs. Crockett's death, the contest passed into the hands of Murray Skinner, and, under her direction, is being sponsored by the Midwest Poetry League. Open to all poets, the rules are as follows: Ballad: Old Style, Popular, or Literary; submit four unsigned copies, accompanied by a separate slip giving title, first line of the poem, and author's name; enclose self-addressed, stamped envelope for return of entry after the judging; send to clerks of judges: Clarence O. and Marie L. Adams, 7077 W. 24th Ave., Gary, Ind.; mark envelope Ballad Contest. The awards include: 1st prize, the Edna St. John Crockett Award of $10 presented by the Word Weavers; 2nd prize, the Murray Skinner Award of $5; 3rd prize, a book of contemporary verse. Time limit for making entry: September 15, 1947. For any queries write: Murray Skinner, 8627 Denver Ave., Los Angeles 44, Calif.

* * *

Walter Leuba of Pittsburgh, Pa., notifies me as follows:

> The following notes may interest your readers. A point in the Norman Douglas bibliography: I don't know if it has been previously recorded, but there is an amusing variant in copies of the first American trade edition of Norman Douglas's "Good-bye to Western Culture," Harper & Bros., New York and London, 1930. It occurs in the listing of "Books by the same author" on the page facing the title. In the list the various titles are separated by a printer's flower. There are copies in which, in one place where there should be such a mark, it is not there, and consequently one of Douglas's books appears to be called "They Went Alone."
>
> A reviewer of Max Beerbohm's new volume, in the *New York Herald Tribune* Books, does the identical thing for that writer and adds "More and Even Now" to the bibliography of his works.
>
> A slightly different kind of attribution is the George Saintsbury title listed not long ago by a New York bookseller—"Notes on a Salt Cellar."

* * *

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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(Continued on page 38)

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(Continued from page 37)

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DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 688

Reg. U. S. Patent Office

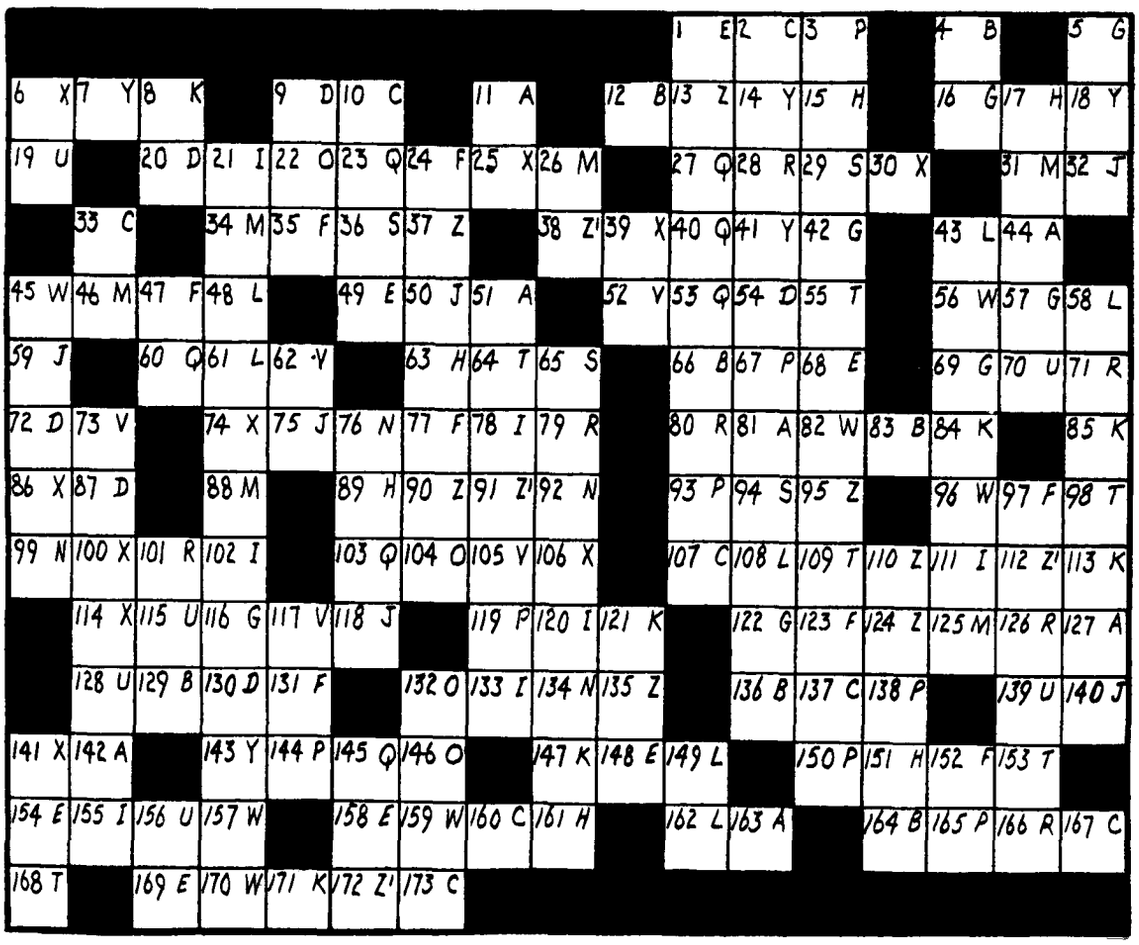
By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. A *signaling apparatus* for sounding instructions to befogged vessels.	142 51 127 11 163 44 81
B. Devitrified; said of glass in the pot during manipulation (Glassmaking).	4 12 164 83 66 136 129
C. Head jailer in "The Yeomen of the Guard" (G. & S. opera).	173 137 33 167 107 10 160 2
D. First name of author in *Word W.*	130 54 20 87 72 9
E. The polecat of Europe or its fur.	158 1 49 169 148 68 154
F. A son of Jacob and Leah (Bib.).	77 131 152 35 123 24 47 97
G. In a body (2 wds.; Fr.).	57 42 69 122 5 16 116
H. Place associated with the poet in *Word J.*	161 151 63 89 17 15
I. Opera by Meyerbeer (1859).	102 155 78 120 21 133 111
J. Called the "Tenth Muse" by Plato.	59 140 75 118 50 32
K. In quarrying, removing the surface soil from (Scot. and Dial. Eng.).	147 171 121 113 85 84 8
L. Painter called the "Spanish Bassano" (1570?-1644).	162 108 48 149 61 43 58
M. Fissured (Zool.).	26 125 34 88 31 46
N. Primeval giant from whose body the gods created the world (Norse Myth.).	134 92 99 76
O. *Pindar wrote forty-four* (extant) to celebrate victories in great national games.	22 146 104 132
P. A scurrilously abusive woman.	93 165 3 67 150 144 119 138
Q. A deponent (Law, U. S.).	60 27 103 53 40 145 23
R. Lifting up to an erect position.	166 101 80 71 28 126 79
S. A heavy blow (Slang).	94 36 65 29
T. Habituated to (2 wds.).	98 168 64 55 153 109
U. American cartoonist and illustrator of books by John Kendrick Bangs, etc.	156 70 139 128 19 115
V. One of the talked-of Presidential candidates for 1948.	62 105 52 117 73
W. American writer, editor, printer (1856-1915; "Message to Garcia").	45 159 96 56 82 170 157
X. To make too emphatic.	6 86 30 39 74 106 141 25 100 114
Y. Friend and counselor of William Cowper (last name).	18 7 143 41 14
Z. Technical treatises on religious or other subjects such as law, medicine, etc. (Hinduism).	135 124 13 37 110 95 90
Z'. River in Germany and Bohemia into North Sea.	172 91 38 112

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean n o t h i n g. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).



Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 32 of this issue.

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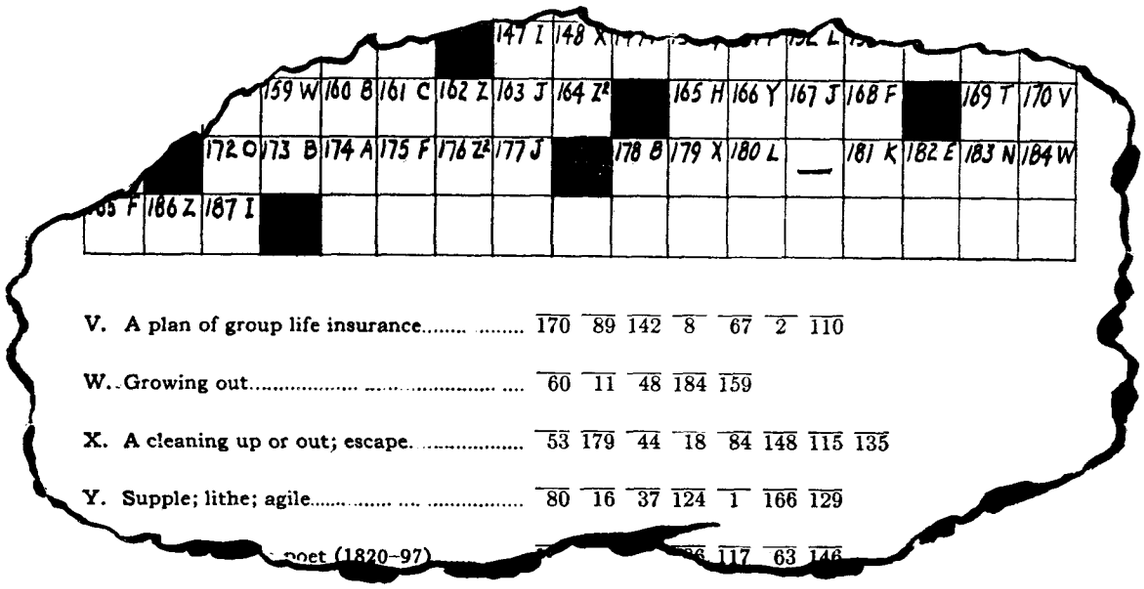

A surprise for Double-Crostic fans

(in connection with the new book of *Double-Crostics, Series 20*)

IT'S happened at last. For the first time in the thirteen years since the first book of Double-Crostics came out, the publishers have figured out a completely new way of setting up Mrs. Kingsley's wonderful puzzles so *that they are easier to read and there's much, much more room to write in.*

Above is a piece torn out of the new page, showing actual size.

We hope the thousands of fans who eagerly await each new Double-Crostic book will be pleased with this spacious new design. It makes its debut in *Double-Crostics, Series 20.* Publication date of Series 20 is June 13th. You can get your copy of the book delivered to you as soon as it comes off press, by sending this coupon, to-day, to your bookseller or The Saturday Review.

SEND THIS COUPON TODAY for your copy of DOUBLE-CROSTICS, 20

To your bookseller or
The Saturday Review of Literature
25 West 45 Street
New York 19, N. Y.

Gentlemen: Please send me ..... copies of DOUBLE-CROSTICS, Series 20, as soon as it comes off press. I will pay postman $1.50 per copy plus few cents mailing charges.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... Zone..... State.....

☐ Check here if remittance enclosed. In this case we'll pay postage.

Condescending note to SRL readers who have never tried Double-Crostics

It will take you 3 minutes flat to learn how to do a Double-Crostic. Then you'll see why Kenneth Roberts calls them "a unique and absorbing form of entertainment" and why Dr. John Haynes Holmes says, "Mrs. Kingsley (creator of Double-Crostics) is indispensable to modern life." And you'll see why the SRL guarantees to refund full purchase price of $1.50 to anyone who, having purchased Double-Crostics, Series 20 (from any source), returns it to us because he is not completely delighted with it.

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